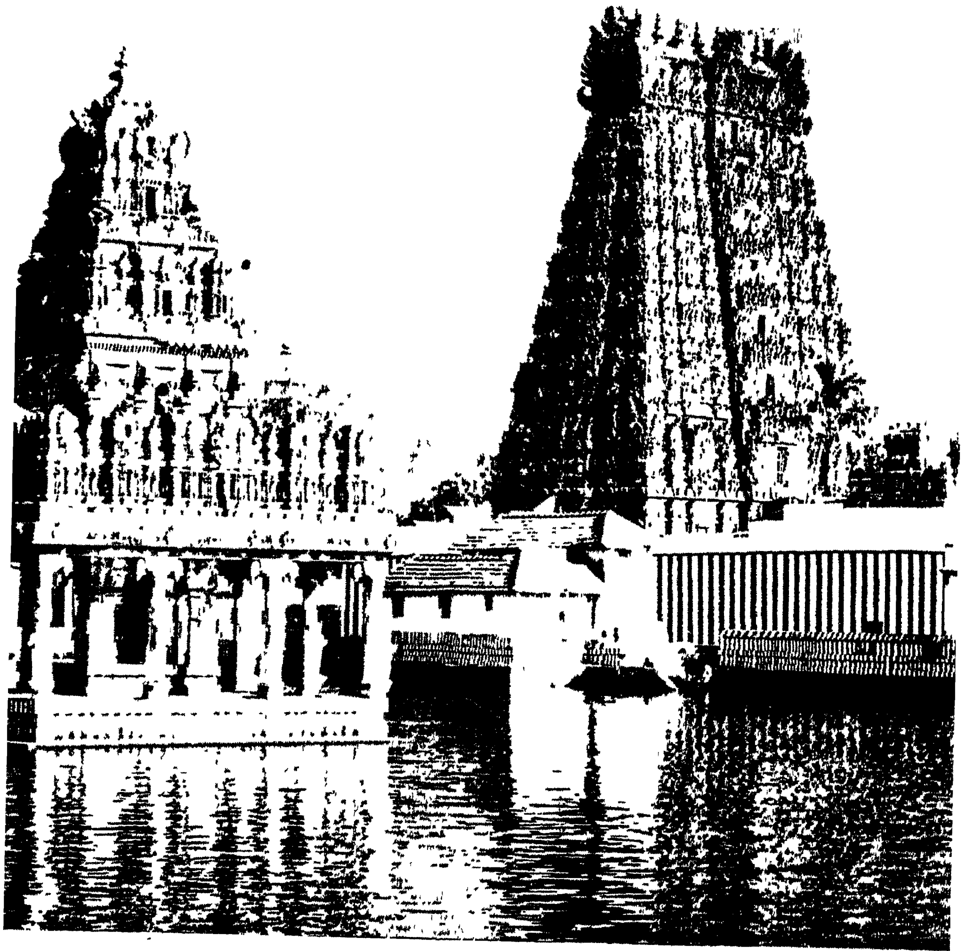
The Sucindram Temple



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A MONOGRAPH

The Sucīndram Temple

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DEDICATED TO

KAVIMANI S. DESIKAVINAYAKAM PILLAI

FOREWORD

In my wanderings, as Art Adviser to the State of Travancore from 1934 to 1948, up and down the naturally beautiful and artistically affluent area that had been brought into administrative unity by the genius of Bālamārtāṇḍa Varma in the 18th century, I had been stirred many a time to cry out for the coming again of a race of artists at the level of inspiration and achievement of the past. As a help towards this end I earnestly desired that scholarship would turn its attention to the detailed study and exposition of the arts and crafts of Kēraḷa either in the unital manner as it gathered around one or other of the great centres of devotion, or in the comparative manner that is so fruitful of historical knowledge and artistic ideas.

Thirty years ago Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy wrote of knowing of only one example of Dravidian painting in Travancore, that of Śiva in Ērrumānūr temple. Within the last fifteen years a large number of mural masterpieces have been brought to light in the temples and palaces of the State, and true copies of a selection of these have been preserved in the Śrī Citrālayam in Trivandrum.

One centre of such art, that in the cave temple of Tirunandikkarai goes back to so early a period as the 8th or 9th century A.D. A considerable amount of portrait sculpture has also been identified. Much speculation and discovery as to origins, movements and variations are involved in these. Dr. K. K. Pillay, in his monumental thesis, has given a fine indication in this direction by his cross references to objects of art elsewhere than in the Śucīndram temple ; and it is to be hoped that he, or some other students of Indian culture as knowledgeable and mentally alert as himself, will follow up these offsets from his base line of survey and make similar studies of such superb units of artistic achievement as the handsome temple of Tiruvaṭṭār and the immense temple of Śrī Padmanābhasvāmi at Trivandrum.

In the present unital study of one of the world's masterpieces of architecture and sculpture Dr. K. K. Pillay has most admirably fulfilled one of my dreams that someone would arise with the knowledge requisite to demonstrating the history, philosophy, character and skill that aspiration and genius had brought together in one or other of the wonderful syntheses that have made Travancore one of the richest areas of art-creation in India, the study of which has the possibility of contributing towards the understanding and ultimate solution of the tragic and inartistic problems of today.

As Shelly wrote, in " A Defence of Poetry " " We have more moral, political and historical wisdom than we know how to reduce into practice ; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies ". If this were so in his time over a century and a quarter ago, it is many times more so in our day. And if, as many believe, including the writer of this Foreword, the understanding and enjoyment of the principles involved in creative art — unity of conception, community of parts, rhythmical vitality, static form — can encourage the carry-

ing over of these characteristics into life, then surely such studies as that of this thesis are of more than ordinary value in the raising of the cultural tone of life, since it makes available in an intelligible and enjoyable form the wisdom and knowledge of which Shelly speaks.

This would be so in regard to any considerable unit round which the influences of history and art have gathered. I say this from experience as it fell to my lot to lay down the lines of such a thesis on the former centre of rulership in Travancore, Padmanābhapuram Palace, which, like Śucīndram temple, as Dr. Pillay has pointed out, combined characteristics of the Kēralan and Tamilian variants of the Hindu culture out of which they both arose. But, while such impartation of the characteristics of art to life is true of " secular " centres of synthetical culture, there comes from sacred centres, such as Śucīndram, a special double exaltation of the creative spirit in that it is not only concentrated on decoration or expression but is devoted to devotion.

A refreshing feature of Dr. Pillay's monograph is its freedom of mind and its exercise of the critical faculty. I am specially interested in the latter in his correction of an error of my own in allowing enthusiasm over an artistic discovery to obscure my own critical faculty and to accept from others an interpretation which I was soon to realise as erroneous. I am entirely in agreement with his explanation of the Viśvarūpam; and am happy that a cast of so superb an example of stone relief was installed in the Government Museum of Trivandrum for all to see.

It is much to be hoped that a work of such dimensions and historical and artistic value will find a large number of readers both inside India and outside, and will take its place as a book of permanent reference in University and Art Libraries.

Sevashrama, Adyar
October 9, 1952

JAMES H. COUSINS

PREFACE

This monograph is the outcome of a Thesis submitted by me in 1946 to the Madras University. It is an historical study of the Śucīndram temple, which affords a fertile field for investigation into different aspects of life spread over long vistas of time. A striking feature of the early history of Nāñcināḍ, of which Śucīndram formed the Spiritual Capital, is that it became the cockpit of South India. Exposed to frequent attacks from outside, Nāñcināḍ fell successively under the sway of the Āy, Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa and Vēṇāḍ rulers, and for a time under the Vijayanagar and Nāyak chieftains. Little wonder, the different phases of political history were reflected in the development of the temple at Śucīndram.

The various edifices and treasures of art, too, owe their rise to different monarchs and patrons. In India, as in Greece, art was the handmaid of religion, and the houses of the gods afforded scope for the expression of the artistic genius of the people. A systematic study of the evolution of South Indian architecture, sculpture and iconography cannot be undertaken

without an intensive investigation into the features presented by all the important temples.

It is now my pleasant duty to thank those who have helped me in the preparation of this work. The Madras University was good enough to grant me in 1943 a Fellowship, which enabled me to conduct the research under the valuable guidance of Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the then Head of the Department of Indian History and Archaeology. I am deeply grateful to the University of Madras and to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, whose help, always readily given and whose enthusiasm always infectious, have immeasurably encouraged me in my task. His critical acumen and clear judgment have been my unfailing help.

My thanks are due to the then Government of Travancore and her enlightened Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, for the kind permission granted me to take photographs of the artistic elements in the temple and to peruse the original documents in the Central Vernacular Records and Oriental Manuscripts Libraries at Trivandrum. I am also obliged to Sri R. Vasudeva Poduval, the then Director of Archaeology, Travancore, who kindly allowed me the use of his Departmental Library and permitted me reproduce in this book the photographs of the jewels in the temple.

A special tribute of gratitude is due to Kavimani Sri S. Desikavinayakam Pillai for his constant encouragement in my research. He was kind enough to spend with me several weeks at Śucīndram, in spite of indifferent health, helping me study the inscriptions *in situ*. My debt to him is unrepayable and stands unrepaid. However, neither he nor anyone else is responsible for the views contained in this book.

Brahmasri P. Parameswara Sarma, the Vattappalli Sthanikar of the temple, has given me immense help. He kindly per-

mitted me to study the countless bundles of palm-leaf records pertaining to the temple and reproduce extracts from them in this book. He lent me the 'Plan of Śucīndram in the time of Bālamārtānda Varma', which is reproduced here with his kind permission. Besides, he furnished me with firsthand information regarding the rites and ceremonies of the temple. It is a pleasure to acknowledge my profound gratitude to him.

I am also indebted to Dr. V. Raghavan for helping me study several Sthalapurānas, to Sri P. K. Panikkar and Sri V. Kalyanasundaram for assisting me prepare the Maps and Plans, to Sri R. S. Desikan for making valuable suggestions when the book was under print and to Sri K. Parthasarathy for preparing the Index. To Dr. James Cousins I owe special thanks for honouring me with his kind Foreword to the book.

Sri C. T. Nachiappan of Kalakshetra took the photographs and Sri K. Srinivasulu of the Besant School, Adyar, prepared the sketches. Both of them enthusiastically accompanied me to Śucīndram in this connection and I am greatly beholden to them. Lastly, I have much pleasure in recording my appreciation of the services rendered by the G. S. Press, the Associated Printers and Klein & Peyerl, the Block-makers, in the production of this book.

Madras,
11th December, 1952.

K. K. PILLAY

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

A. R. E.	..	Annual Report of Epigraphy, (Madras). Often only the Number and the Year are indicated, as is the practice.
E. I.	..	Epigraphia Indica.
G. P.	..	Ground Plan of the Śucīndram Temple.
J. O. R.	..	Journal of Oriental Research, Madras.
J. R. A. S.	..	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
O. H. MSS.	.	Oriental Historical Manuscripts.
Q. J. M. S.	..	Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.
S. I. I.	..	South Indian Inscriptions.
S. M.	..	State Manual, Travancore.
T. A. R.	..	Travancore Annual Report of Epigraphy.
T. A. S.	..	Travancore Archaeological Series.
T. S. S.	..	Travancore Sanskrit Series
A. S. S. I.	..	Archaeological Survey of Southern India.
I. A.	..	Indian Antiquary.

C H A P T E R I

GEOGRAPHICAL BASIS

L*ocation* · Śucīndram is near the land's end of India. Hardly eight miles to the north-west of the famous Kanyākumari (Cape Comorin), it lies just by the side of the 'Trivandrum—Cape Road.' The charming village flourishes on the southern bank of the river Paḻayāṟ. Situated within two miles of Nagercoil, the principal town of Nāñcināḍ, Śucīndram (8°, 9′ 22″ N. and 77° 30′ 26″ E.) forms part of the Agastīśvaram Taluk in the Trivandrum District of Travancore.

The two southernmost taluks of Travancore, Tōvāḷai and Agastīśvaram, together constitute, what has been known for ages as Nāñcināḍ Though the boundaries of Nāñcināḍ have varied slightly from period to period, Śucīndram was always included in it, as is clear from the early inscriptions.[1]

Topography : The physical geography of Nāñcināḍ, like its social economy, typifies the interaction of the East and West coasts of South

1. The origin of the name 'Nāñcināḍ' is a subject of controversy. Some hold that the land is called after Nāñcikkuṟavan who is believed to have ruled over it in the past. This view is rightly challenged by many who state that the so-called 'Nāñcikkuṟavan,' if at all a historical personage, owed his name to the country, and not the other way. In truth, as will be shown presently, 'Nāñcikkuṟavan' appears to have been only an eponymous character like Rōmulus of Rōme. Further, the name Nāñcināḍ itself occurs in the early epigraphs far anterior to the supposed period of Nāñcikkuṟavan's rule. Moreover, the fact that a ruler figuring in 'Puṟanāṉūṟu,' the ancient Tamil Classic, is described as 'Nāñcil Porunan' (Puṟam—Line 380) shows that, long before the period ascribed to Nāñcikkuṟavan,

India. The dominant topographical feature in Nāñcinād is the southern range of the Sahyādri. The northern tracts of Nāñcinād, comprising the major part of Tōvāḻai Taluk, are rugged and hilly. The mountain ranges here are fairly broad, high and steep. Mahēndragiri (5,427 feet) is the highest point. The Ghats continue southward with an average elevation of over 2,500 feet, but end abruptly along the range passing from Bhūtappāndy to Ārāmboli, leaving a line of easy access from the east to the west in the Ārāmboḷi Pass. South of Ārāmboḷi, the Ghats are represented by a number of isolated hilly masses, which finally tail off towards the Cape. West of Nagercoil and south of the southern termination of the Ghats is a dissected piece of upland which is largely wooded. Between this dissected upland and the southern continuation of the Ghats south of Ārāmboḷi, is a north-south lowland about four miles broad, through which flows the Paḻayāṟ which empties itself into the Arabian Sea through the Manarkudi Kāyal. About the higher reaches of the Maṉarkuḍi Kāyal, the flat-lying country has been converted into an extensive salt pan. The lowland is a densely populated area with a number of large settlements like Nagercoil, Śucīndram, Tērūr, Eraviputūr and Mailāḍi. The Trivandrum — Cape Trunk Road runs across the lowland from Nagercoil, through Śucīndram to the Cape, skirting the southern slope of the Maruttuvāmalai.

Climate : In Śucīndram, the thermometer records a fairly high degree of temperature throughout the year. No doubt, proximity to the sea renders the atmosphere fairly humid. The winter season is perhaps the driest part of the year, February recording humidity at its lowest. But nights are chill during the period. The sudden variations in temperature between day and night often lead to the outbreak of several kinds of illness. In Summer the day is extremely hot. This is the period when epidemics like small-pox and dysentery, as also different types of fever, break out in a virulent form. From April onwards the temperature during day gradually falls. In October it is at its lowest when the rainfall is maximal.

Surface Winds : Surface winds blowing in and about Śucīndram are lower in velocity than in the Tirunelvēli and Madurai Districts, to the east of the Ghats. They are also much less violent and stormy than in

the name Nāñcinād was in vogue The view held by some writers that it is the land of forts, since Nāñcil denotes bastion or fort, seems far-fetched. The most acceptable view seems to be that it denotes the land of paddy fields (நஞ்சை + நாடு) or the country of the ploughshare (நாஞ்சில் + நாடு), 'nāñcil' meaning ploughshare

the gaps of Ārāmboli and Śenkōṭṭa. The wind velocity, except during the gusts and squalls that accompany the monsoon precipitation, is never more than 10 to 15 miles per hour. During the months of July and August the wind is fairly strong; but it dies down in September, and, owing to the general reversal of the wind system that occurs on the eve of the North East Monsoon, the velocity of the wind is very low in October. It continues to be feeble during the retreating monsoon in November. With the approach of the dry season by January, there is almost perfect calm; and, it is not until the middle of May that high winds appear, sometimes in the shape of summer storms.

Śucīndram is, as the crow flies, only about five miles from the sea. Hence the air motion at Śucīndram often consists of an alternating movement between land breeze and sea breeze. The diurnal variation of velocity of the two differs considerably in character at different seasons of the year. Generally it is from November to January that the interaction of the land and sea breezes is most prominent. The land wind is strongest a little after sunrise, and the sea breeze starts in the afternoon about 2 P.M. From the end of January down to April, the temperature steadily increases, with the result that the sea breeze begins even about 11 A.M. Thus the Summer witnesses a lengthening of the period of the sea breeze. However, for over six months, commencing with May and lasting till November, the sea breeze is rather weak; it starts late in the afternoon and blows till shortly after midnight.

Rainfall: The average record of rainfall[2] in Nāñcināḍ reveals interesting facts, marking out this region from the rest of the Malabār Coast. The mean annual rainfall in Agastīśvaram Taluk is 36·4″ and that in Tōvāḷai 48·4″. This wide difference between the two adjoining Taluks occurs on account of the greater domination of the hills in Tōvāḷai.

The amount of rainfall, as indicated by the mean annual figures, is not high, certainly not for a predominantly rice-growing region. In fact, the rainfall at stations along the coast shows a progressive increase from Cape Comorin in the south to Ālvāy in the north. But, unlike in Central and North Travancore, the rainfall is not concentrated in the period of the South West Monsoon. No month is without precipitation. Winter and early Spring have, between them, over 5·2″ of rainfall in Agastīśvaram. The South West Monsoon (May-August) yields 12·6″, while the

2. Statistical data regarding rainfall, temperature etc., have been gathered from the Travancore Annual Reports, the Trivandrum Observatory and the Executive Engineer's Office, Nagercoil.

North East Monsoon (September-November,) supplies 18·8″. October records the highest monthly rainfall of 7·8″. The distribution of rainfall throughout the year has an important bearing on the agricultural operations of Nāñcināḍ. Though the quantity of rainfall from the South West Monsoon is comparatively less, yet, it is spread over a longer period. Moreover, it is this South West Monsoon which is peculiar to the West Coast, and has contributed to the variety and wealth of its natural scenery.

During the period of the South West Monsoon, often, rainfall is preceded and accompanied by stormy weather. Cyclones also, though rare, affect the area in this season. The hot months of April and May witness summer storms, often accompanied by brisk showers. These summer showers are, by their nature, local and irregular. These occasional outbursts of clouds are, however, eagerly looked forward to by the cultivators, for, soon after a downpour the sowing of the Kanni or Kār crop is commenced.[3] In and around Śucīndram, on account of the large reservoirs of water stored up in tanks, some times, the sowing for the Kanni crop is begun independent of the rains.

The fact that the average rainfall is considerably lower in Śucīndram and its vicinity, than in Central and North Travancore, is not without its redeeming features. Floods, and consequent damage to crops, occur. less frequently here, than in the north. No doubt, in South Travancore too, occasionally, serious loss is caused by floods, as was experienced in November 1922. Fortunately, such calamities are few and far between.

On the other hand, Nāñcināḍ suffers droughts frequently; and in recent times, scarcity of rain has often led to failure of crops. The year 1860 saw the most severe drought yet in South Travancore. In 1886 and 1890, in 1892 and 1893, and recently in 1934, 1938 and 1943, rainfall was considerably less than normal. It is believed that the frequent scarcity is largely due to the increased denudation of forests in the neighbourhood of Nāñcināḍ.

Soils : Obviously, vegetation is dependent as much on the nature of the soil as on rainfall. After a thorough examination of the soil in Nāñcināḍ and the adjoining tracts, Bruce Foote, the Geological Expert, states thus :—"The prevalent soils of South Travancore are red ones varying in the quantity of their ferruginous element. The red soils seen inland near the Main Trunk Road are chiefly formed of gneissic debris by subaerial decomposition. True alluvial soils occur very rarely, if at

3 Kanni or Kār crop is that harvested in September-October.

all, now-a-days, those which fill the bottoms of the many valleys and creeks in which paddy is cultivated being greatly altered from their original condition by centuries of cultivation, and the addition of various mineral, vegetable and animal manures." Concerning the soil found in the paddy fields in and near Śucīndram, the same expert adds that "the alluvium in the valley of the Paḻayāṟ, which flows south from the west flank of Mahēndragiri past Nagercoil, is where pure, a coarse gritty silt."[4] The silt carried by the river is, to a certain extent, deposited in the fields, but the bulk of it finds its way into the tanks. During Summer, when a large part of the bed of the tanks is not under water, the sedimentary silt is removed by cultivators to fields for its rich manurial value.

The mud found in the fringes of the tanks is used for pottery, and more important, for the making of bricks, burnt and unburnt. The clay in Tattiyārkulam, a mile and a half north-west of Śucīndram, has been famous for its especial suitability for the manufacture of strong bricks. The popular report in Śucīndram is that the bricks for the construction of the lofty tower at the entrance of the temple were made out of the Tattiyārkuḻam clay. Probably the same source was utilised for several other structures in Śucīndram and its neighbourhood.

Gneiss: Nāñcināḍ, and particularly the region near about Cape Comorin, is remarkably rich in granite gneiss, which is eminently suited for the construction of temples and images. Concerning the gneiss in South Travancore, Bruce Foote writes thus: — "The predominant character of the gneiss rocks in this quarter is that of well-bedded, massive, quartzo-felspathic granite gneiss with a very variable quantity of (generally black) mica and very numerous small red or pinkish garnets. This is the characteristic rock at Cape Comorin and very generally throughout South Travancore and Tinnevelly District as well." The availability of this type of gneiss in Mailāḍi, Īttaṅkāḍ, and Vaḻukkampāṟai, all of which are villages in the neighbourhood of Śucīndram, has been of immense use in the carving of excellent images and figurines found in the temple. The marvellously sculptured figures of Hanumān and Garuḍa in the Śrībalipura, of Manmatha, and Rati in the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, as well as, the portraits in stone of the two Vēṇāḍ kings in the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa[5] are all shaped out of excellent gneiss, evidently obtained from the above-mentioned places.

4. Records of the Geological Survey of India., Vol XVI.
5. See Infra Chapter XII.

Iron: Iron ore is available in parts of Travancore; but smelting has been given up on account of the competition of cheap imported iron. At Mailāḍi, situated about three miles to the south-east of Śucīndram, iron ore was smelted until about 60 years ago. Gathering the iron ore at the foot of an adjoining hillock after heavy showers, the people of the locality sifted and winnowed it and smelted it into lumps of different sizes. Blacksmiths purchased the smelted iron and made out of it agricultural tools and other implements, which were reported to be more durable than those made of imported material. Yet another place in Nāñcināḍ reputed for its smelting industry is Ārāmboḷi, about 8 miles north-east of Śucīndram. But, in all these places, the industry has disappeared, because imported iron is cheaper and more refined than the locally manufactured variety.

Salt Pans: Near Śucīndram lies the expanse of salt pans. In the villages of Manarkuḍi, Tāmarakuḷam and Vāriyūr, all in easy reach of Śucīndram, there flourish vast stretches of salt pans. It is remarkable that these factories, which constitute the principal salt-producing centres of Travancore even at the present day, have been functioning for ages. That the pans in Manarkudi were in existence as early as the time of Rājēndra Cōḷa (1012-1044 A.D.) is evident from the description of the factory as Mahipāla-kulā-kala-ppēraḷam in an inscription of Rājādhirājadēva, found at Cape Comorin.[6] Again, that the pans of Vāriyūr were manufacturing salt earlier than the 11th century A.D. is learnt from an epigraph of Kulōttunga Cōḷa Dēva I.[7] It is noteworthy that the Vāriyūr inscription of Kulōttunga registers an endowment of two pans in the salt factory for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp in the Śucīndram temple.

Vegetation: Nāñcināḍ has rich natural vegetation on the hills and cultivated vegetation in the plains. The southern extremities of the Western Ghats and the minor hillocks like Maruttuvāmalai and Tāḍakamalai abound in numberless varieties of medicinal herbs. But teak, rosewood and ebony, which grow in the forests of Central and North Travancore, do not flourish near about Śucīndram. The hills of Kaḍukkarai and Tadikkārankōṇam on the northern fringe of Nāñcināḍ, however, have some timber-yielding trees.[8] Ebony and jack are the most

6. T. A. S., I, p. 163, Mahipāla Kulā Kala was one of the surnames of Rājēndra.
7. T. A. S., I, p. 247.
8. Bamboo of large size, available from these hills, is used to serve as poles for carrying Vāhanas in the Śucīndram Temple. Bamboo of Nāñcināḍ has always been in great demand in the temples of Rāmēśvaram and Tirunelvēli.

common types found on these hills. However, for large supplies of high class timber of different types, Śucīndram and Nāñcınāḍ have had to depend on the hills and forests of Central Travancore.

More important is the cultivated vegetation of the plains of Nāñcināḍ. Nāñcināḍ has been famous all through the ages for her agricultural prosperity,[9] and is fittingly described as the 'granary of Travancore.' Śucīndram, like every other village of picturesque Nāñcināḍ, is surrounded by broad stretches of verdant paddy lands. The cultivated area in and around Śucīndram forms the most fertile region in the whole of Nāñcināḍ. The vast expanses of paddy fields known as 'Śivindapparru' to the west, 'Tērpparru' to the north, 'Kīlapparru' and 'Nallūrpparru' to the east and the 'Kākkumūr', 'Kuṛicci' and 'Paṛakkaipparru' to the south of Śucīndram, present the most coveted and highly-priced paddy lands of Nāñcināḍ.

The high yield of the paddy crop in the locality is ascribable as much to the inherent richness of the soil as to the abundant supply of water needed for cultivation. Paḻayāṛ, the southernmost river of Travancore, feeds the best part of the arable land of this region with its numerous channels. What is more, at fairly short intervals, there lies a network of tanks and ponds, serving as reservoirs. The 'Śivindakkuḷam' and the 'Vētkaikkuḷam', the 'Paṛakkaikkuḷam' and the 'Tērkkuḷam', all within easy reach of Śucīndram, are about the biggest tanks in Nāñcināḍ, and between them, they irrigate over two thousand acres of paddy fields. But the entire cultivable land is not irrigated by the river and the tanks alone. A considerable area, brought recently under cultivation, depends, in a large measure, on rainfall.

A paradox appears here. The average rainfall in Nāñcināḍ is low compared with the rest of Travancore, as noticed before. Yet, paddy cultivation which requires an abundant and a steady supply of water, is preponderant in the region. Geologists explain the phenomenon by the peculiar nature of the soil. It is pointed out that the soil presents a fairly high water table, which allows the roots to get into easy touch with subsoil water.

Although paddy cultivation is by far the staple crop of Śucīndram, as indeed of entire Nāñcināḍ, it is by no means the only natural product. Coconut groves abound in various parts of the village, particularly on its

9 Even so early as the Śangam Age, the richness of her soil had evoked admiration. Stanzas 137 and 139 of 'Puṛanāṉūṛu' refer to it and even go so far as to suggest the superfluity of ploughing the land

southern and eastern outskirts. Curiously enough, in Sucīndram and Nāñcināḍ, the palmyrah also flourishes in abundance. Indeed, the palmyrah is as ubiquitous as the coconut ; in this respect, Nāñcināḍ at once partakes of the features of the West Coast and the East Coast, for the coconut tree is doubtless the staple palm of the West, as the palmyrah is of the East Coast.

Among other trees, the tamarind (Tamarindus indica), the punnai or laurel (Calophyllum inophyllum), the māvu or mango (Mangifera indica), the pilāvu or jack (Artocarpus integrifolia), and the kollāmāvu or cashewnut tree (Anacardium occidentale) are about those commonly found in gardens attached to houses or in the groves flourishing in the outskirts of the villages. Among avenue trees, the Ālamaram or banyan (Ficus bengalensis) abounds on both the sides of the Main Road. The Araśu or Ficus religiosa on the bunds of the tanks and by the side of the several shrines in the village, the Poo-araśu (Thespasia-populuca) and the Vēmbu or Mārgōsa (Melia azadirachta) on the sides of the by-ways and by-lanes, as also in the gardens attached to houses, form the most popular ones.

Numerous flower-gardens flourish in the various parts of the village. Since the temple requires quite a large quantity of different kinds of flowers, the lay-out and maintenance of flower-gardens have always received great attention. Many are the gifts made by patrons and devotees in the past for the supply of flower-garlands to the temple, and certain endowments register specific provision for the maintenance of flower-gardens. Besides the regularly enclosed gardens fringing the outskirts of the village, most of the Maṭhas, like the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha, the Nāyakar Matha and the Dharmapuram Maṭha possess lovely flower-gardens (Nandāvanams) attached to them. Also, flower-bearing shrubs are seen in adundance on the banks of the canals and tanks, as well as, on the bunds of paddy fields.

Among the flowers common in Sucīndram the most prominent ones are the Araḷi (Nerium odorum), the Piccippu (Jusminum grandiforum), the Nantiyāvaṭṭam (Ervatamia coromaria), the Paviḻamalli (Nycanthes arbor-tristis), Campakam (Michelia champaca) and Javanti (Vicoa auriculata).[10] The Tāmara or lotus (Nelumbium speciosum), both

10. Javanti is remarkably luxuriant in its growth in Sucīndram and is abundantly used in the temple On the 5th day of the Mahōtsava in Mārkaḷi a huge garland of Javanti decorates the principal Vāhana People of the locality can use the Javanti flower only after the 5th day of the Mahōtsava.

the white and the rose variety, is found in abundance in some of the ponds. The Cemparutti (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis), a shrub rising to about 10 feet in height, grows in several gardens. The large crimson flowers of this shrub are quite fascinating to look at.

Scenery: The vast expanse of paddy fields, the wavy coconut and palmyrah groves, the mango, tamarind, laurel, plantain and margosa trees in between the inhabited quarters, the tanks and ponds, the river and its channels, and above all, the delightful flower-gardens in different parts of the village present a fascinating appearance. The view of the entire landscape, seen from the top storey of the stately tower of the pagoda, is enchanting. The scenery is superb. Nature is seen in her lavish beauty. Sir M. E. Grant Duff, a former Governor of Madras, described Travancore as "one of the fairest and most interesting realms that Asia has to show." Another Governor of Madras, Lord Connemara, compared Travancore to Italy and called it a fairy-land. Śucīndram and the rest of Nāñcināḍ are typical of this picturesque country.

The symmetrical formation of the principal streets of Śucīndram adds to the charm of her natural scenery. The main streets running around the four extremities of the village are of considerable width, stretching to well over 60 feet. The Ratha Vīthis, as they are called, form the track through which the big cars of the temple are drawn on occasions of the Car Festival.

Regular street formation is a feature characteristic of the East Coast; in Travancore, to the north of Trivandrum, it is uncommon. But it is not only in the structure of the big streets that Śucīndram resembles Tamiḻ Nāḍ proper. The by-ways and by-lanes are far too narrow, as in the region beyond the Ghats. Moreover, the houses are built too close to each other. This circumstance, together with the absence of a proper system of drainage, certainly leaves much to be desired in the sanitary conditions of the locality.

Regarding the location of houses, Śucīndram and the rest of Nāñcināḍ, differ fundamentally from Central and North Travancore. In the latter regions, as also in Malabār, a continuous expanse of isolated houses is the striking feature. Obviously, this is ideal from the standpoint of public health. In Nāñcināḍ and the East Coast, perhaps, the fear of high-way robbers was originally responsible for the close aggregation of houses. The desire to use every inch of arable land was evidently another factor which led to this unfortunate result.

It is interesting to notice the distribution of population in the various parts of Śucīndram; more so, because people of the particular castes appear to have resided in the same localities as at present for quite a long time.[11] The quarters of the Brahmins range on both the rows of the South Street, on the eastern row of the West Street, the southern row of the North Street, as also on the streets stretching to the north and west of the Teppakkuḷam, the Temple Tank. Besides, in that part of the village known as Tekkuman, lying on the southern fringe of Śucīndram, numerous houses of brahmins are found situated on both the rows of the street called Eraṭṭaitteruvu The Mathas, the residence of various religious functionaries like the Nambūdiri arcakas, the old Yōgakkār and the Pōṟṟi arcakas, are located in the South and North Streets. The Vaṭṭappalli Maṭha is situated in a narrow street just to the west of the temple; the Nāyakar Maṭha is on the northern bank of the Teppakkuḷam, while the Dharmapuram and the Ayyā Maṭhas are in the South Street.

The Śaiva Piḷḷamār have their houses in Mādatteruvu, immediately to the south of the temple. The Nāñcināḍ Veḷḷāḷas have their houses on the western wing of the West Street and in Tekkumaṇ. At the eastern end of the Koṟṟayārtiṭṭai-teruvu live the Yādavas, the members of the shepherd class. The Dēvadāsis, the most numerous among the non-brahmin residents of Śucīndram, have their quarters in the Sannadhi Street, the East Street and the Naḍutteruvu. A few families of Nāirs live in the West and East Streets. The Uvaccas, employed in temple service as pipers and drummers, reside at the west end of the Sannadhi Street.

The Vairāvis, a class attached to the pagoda from days of old, reside in Akkarai, the village just to the north of Śucīndram. The goldsmiths, the blacksmiths, as also the washermen and barbers, are not within the confines of Śucīndram, but have their houses in Akkarai and Tekkumaṇ. The Śānārs and Paṟiahs, belonging to the so-called 'depressed classes' of the Hindu community, again, do not find a place in Śucīndram proper. They inhabit the villages of Kakkāḍ, Kuṟicci, and several hamlets located between Śucīndram, Tērūr and Tāmarakulam. Numerous Paṟiahs and Śānārs, resident in these villages, have been converted to Christianity, in recent times.

11. See Plan No. 2. 'Śucīndram in the time of Bālā Mārtānda Varma 1729-58 A.D.'

Village Union: At present, the population of Śucīndram pakuti, the revenue unit, is 8,948, and the number of houses, 2,600. Śucīndram has been classed as a 'Village Union' under the Village Union Act of Travancore. By the Act, lighting and sanitation are entrusted to the Village Union, which consists of five officials and six non-officials. The officials are the Tahsildar, the Sanitary Circle Officer, the Section Officer of the Public Works Department as well as the Co-operative and Agricultural Inspectors of the Agastīśvaram Taluk. Among the non-official members, five are elected by the people and one is nominated by the Government, every three years. Both the President and Vice-President are elected by the Union from the non-official members. The income of the Union consists of a cess on land at the rate of 1 pie for every anna of Land Tax paid, a Profession Tax on annual incomes of Rs. 300 and above at the rate of 4 annas per annum for every Rs. 100, licence fees on Hotels at Re. 1 per annum and an Entertainment Tax at Re. 1 per day.

The influence of the neighbouring villages: It may be observed that the villages near Śucīndram have always exercised a large measure of influence on her temple. Famous Kanyākumari is only about eight miles south-east of Śucīndram, and this circumstance has always been of great importance. In the first place, the legends concerning the temples of both Śucīndram and Kanyākumari bear a close inter-connection. The popular belief is that the sacred water anointing the image of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy of Śucīndram reaches Kanyākumari by an underground passage. That the god at Śucīndram sought the hand of the virgin goddess at Kanyākumari is a matter of common tradition. Legends apart, the historical circumstance that Kanyākumari was in the possession of the Pāṇḍya sovereigns for many centuries in the past, exercised a vital influence on the fortunes of Śucīndram. Naturally, the Pāṇḍyas were attracted to Śucīndram and the places to the west of it. Further, on the wake of the Pāṇḍyas, came an unceasing succession of invaders like the Cōlas, the Vijayanagar and the Nāyak generals. The history of Śucīndram bears clear proof of their contact. Down to this day, visitors from far and near, proceeding to the more renowned pagoda of Cape Comorin, have been drawn to Śucīndram also.

Again, Kōṭṭāṟ, now a part of the Municipality of Nagercoil, was a commercial centre of fame, from the days of yore. Obviously, long before the time of Ptolemy, Kōṭṭāṟ must have attained a leading position, for, he himself describes it as the Metropolis. The commercial impor-

tance and the ever-increasing wealth of Kōṭṭāṟ, undoubtedly attracted many an invader. Indeed, during the palmy days of the Pāṇḍyas, the Cōlas, the Vijayanagar and the Nāyak rulers, Kōṭṭār formed a bone of contention between the invaders and the local rulers. And Śucīndram is hardly two miles from Kōṭṭāṟ. Invaders of Kōṭṭāṟ invariably paid their homage to the sacred shrine of Sthāṇumālaya, and often established their sway over Śucīndram as well

However, the invasions might not have been so frequent but for the famous Āralvāymoḻi Pass, the Khyber of Travancore. Āralvāymoḻi, now under the anglicised, if also uncouth, name Ārāmboli, is about 6 miles from Kōttār and about 8 miles from Śucīndram by the Main Road.[12] Times without number, conquerors and plunderers from the sunny and plains of the East poured on Nāñcināḍ through the Ārāmboli Gap. The fertility of Nāñcināḍ, no doubt, served as a bait. Nevertheless, but for the facile pass, the attacks might have been less frequent.

The fact that the immediate neighbourhood of Śucīndram is studded with several prosperous villages has also exercised a considerable influence on the pagoda. Āśrāmam, Kariyamāṇikkapuram and Idalākkudi in the north-west, Paṟakkai and Tenkomputūr in the south-west, Tekkumaṇ, Kākkumputūr and Kuṟicci in the south, Kakkāḍu and Tāmarakuḷam in the south-east, Tērūr, Kaṟuppukkōṭṭai and Putugrāmam in the north, Nallūr, Eraviputūr and Marungūr in the north-east, are some of the prominent villages, all located within a radius of four miles of Śucīndram. This circumstance has gone a long way to make the temple what it is. Benefactions and endowments have freely flowed from them. Crowds of visitors and devotees from these places used to flock to the shrine every day, and particularly on festive occasions. Several employees of the pagoda have been, and continue to be, drawn from these villages. Various kinds of gratuitous service have been often rendered to the temple by their inhabitants. The people of these villages have contributed to the prosperity and fame of the pagoda, while they themselves were influenced by the sacred temple and its institutions. No wonder, Śucīndram has become the 'Spiritual Metropolis' of Nāñcināḍ.

12. Through the shorter route via Marungūr, Śucīndram is hardly 5 miles distant from the Pass. The relics of a huge stable and a large rampart, just to the north of Marungūr, indicate that the pathway of the invading hosts lay through this shorter route.

C H A P T E R I I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of Kēraḷa—the Paraśurāma legend : The 'Kēraḷōlpatti' in Malayāḷam, and the 'Kēraḷamāhātmyam' in Samskṛit, both accept the traditional account ascribing the creation of Kēraḷa to Paraśurāma, the warrior sage. Thus Nāñcinād, like the rest of the territory between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, stretching from Gōkarṇam in the north to Cape Comorin the southernmost tip, is said to have emerged from the ocean at the command of Paraśurāma. The early history of the region is also furnished by these two works. But neither 'Kēraḷōlpatti' nor 'Kēraḷamāhātmyam' was compiled earlier than the seventeenth century, and judged by the canons of historical criticism, they cannot be considered reliable [1]. A later interpretation brought to bear upon the Paraśurāma legend is that it is an allegoric representation of the advent of the Āryans into Kēraḷa, similar to the view expressed

1. Surely, Nagamiah overestimated the value of 'Kēralōlpatti' when he wrote that, "since the tradition recorded in it is found interwoven with the details of the daily life of the people, it attains the rank of authentic history" (State Manual, I page 210). Logan, though rather severe and unsympathetic, is not far incorrect in his view that "' Kēralōlpatti' is a farrago of legendary nonsense." In fact, it is full of anachronisms and contradictions. Nor is the 'Kēralamāhātmyam' on a better footing. In addition to the defects of the Malayālam work, this one is vitiated by a desire to prove the thesis of the specially sacred character of the Brahmins of Kēraḷa. Thus, it is hopeless to glean history from either of them

about Agastya's association with the Tamil Nāḍ.[2] Plausible as this seems, it may well be true; but the story that Kēraḷa was redeemed from the sea through supernatural agency is yet in the realm of myths.

The Geological view : Some geologists speak of an early subsidence of the sea by volcanic action, prior to which, the region of Kērala lay under the ocean. In support of this view they urge that some parts of Kēraḷa, especially the littoral tracts, are not so old in their geological formation as the rest of South India, and point to the receding of the sea in historic times from Tṛippunittuṟa and Vaikom, which were, in the days of Ptolemy, flourishing seaports.[3] But these stray researches await further confirmation. Even if they are proved to contain an element of truth, it seems that only the lowlands very near the coast could have been under the sea at one time.

The Lemurian Theory : Besides, there is the tradition embodied in the so-called Lemurian theory, which maintains that there lay a large mass of land to the south of Cape Comorin, later swallowed up by the sea. In support of the theory, its exponents emphasize the similarity in the system of totems prevalent among some of the South Indian and Australian aborigines. They also stress the resemblance in the mode of tree climbing between the Dyāks of Borneo and the Kāḍārs of the Ānamalai Hills. The prevalence of the clipping of the incisor teeth among the Kāḍārs, as well as the Mala-Vēḍans of South India and the Jakūṇs of the Malay Peninsula, is indicated as an additional piece of evidence. But these stray comparisons are far too general and insufficient to warrant the formulation of a Lemurian theory, because among early peoples, certain sociological developments, all the world over, seem to have been fairly similar. Even a few peculiarities found among certain peoples, by themselves, are too slender to prove racial affinity.[4]

2 The parallelism between the Paraśurāma and Agastya legends is striking, and does not seem to be accidental.

3. Kanakasabhai in his "Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago" (p. 19) tries to show that the land near the harbours of Cochin and Alleppy must have emerged only subsequent to the age of Ptolemy.

4. Among the pieces of evidence in favour of the theory, by far the most valuable one is the view of certain geologists that there is identity in the fossil remains, animal and vegetable, in South India, South Africa, Australia and South America. Some writers in Tamil have sought to read too much into certain literary references. See, for example, P. V. Manicka Naicker — Śentamiḻ Celvi Vol. I — Part III ; Sivagnana Yogikal — Śentamiḻ — Vol 38, Part I ; K Appadurai Pillai. "Kumari Kāṇḍam" and N. S. Kandiah Pillai : "Tamiḻar Yār ?" Further researches in subjects like Ethnology and Anthropology alone may furnish conclusive proof.

Āyis : Speculations apart, the starting point for the history of Nāñcināḍ is to be sought in the accounts of foreign observers. The earliest foreign notice about the region comprised in modern Travancore is found in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, compiled sometime between 81 and 96 A.D. Mention is made therein of Komari as a harbour and also of the significant fact that the land to the south of Nelcynḍa up to Komar formed part of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom.[5]

The next European visitor who speaks about this region is Ptolemy, who compiled his 'Geography' about 140 A.D. He states, however, that, to the south of the Cēra Kingdom there flourished the territory of the Āyis, extending from Melcynḍa, obviously identical with Nelcynḍa of the Periplus, to Komari, and that, it was only past Komaria that the Pāṇḍyan Kingdom lay. This suggests that the Āyis had deprived the Pāṇḍyas of the land stretching from Nelcynḍa to Cape Comorin, sometime between 96 and 140 A.D. Who the Āyis were, what their political status was, whether they were independent of the Cēras and Pāṇḍyas, are questions which Ptolemy does not touch upon.

We turn to that fertile but elusive source, the Śangam works, for fresh light. "Puranānūṟu" extols one Āy-Aṇḍiran, a philanthropic king of the region near the Podiyilmalai.[6] He is described as Vēḷ Āyi and Māvēḷ-Āyi in 'Puranānūṟu.'[7] It is further learnt that the principal town, presumably the capital of this Āyi ruler, was Āykuḍy which seems to be identical with the hamlet of the same name near Śenkōṭṭa.[8] But Gopinatha Rao's argument[9] that, since relics of monuments, fortifications and inscriptions are not seen in that place now, it could not have been the capital nearly 2000 years ago, is not convincing. The present condition of Puhār, the famous capital of the Cōḷas and Karuvūr or Vañci, whichever it was, the ancient capital of the Cēras, shows the weakness of Gopinatha Rao's argument.

Āy Aṇḍiran : Since the Āyis emerged into prominence between Nelcynḍa and Komari, sometime between 96 A.D. and 140 A.D., is it

5. Nelcynda has been identified with Kallaḍa by Col. Yule and with Nīṇḍakara near Quilon by K. G. Sesha Aiyar. But neither seems to fit in, because Periplus locates Nelcynda 500 stadia distant from Mouziris, while both Kallaḍa and Nīṇḍakara are more than 800 stadia away from it. Kanakasabhai's identification of the place with Nīrkunṟam near Mīnaccil seems correct.

6 'Puṟam'—Stanzas 130 to 132.

7. 'Puṟam'—Stanza 133 line 7 and Stanza 135 line 13.

8. Swaminatha Aiyar's Introduction to 'Puṟanānūṟu' and Stanza 132 of 'Puṟanānūṟu'.

9. T. A. S., I., p. 188.

not probable that it was Āy Aṇḍiran about whose prowess the 'Puranānūru' presents a glowing picture, who drove away the Pāṇḍyas from that region? Further, the brahmin poet Muḍamōśiyar, the author of the laudatory stanzas on Āy-Aṇḍiran in 'Puranānūru' has also sung in praise of Antuvan Cēral Irumporai and the Cōḷan Perunarkiḷḷi. Presumably, these three rulers were contemporaries. And, according to the computation reckoned on the basis of the Śenguṭṭuvan Gajabāhu synchronism, Antuvan Cēral is believed to have ruled about 100 to 120 A.D.[10] This seems to indicate that Aṇḍiran's period also ranged about the first half of the second century A.D.

Titiyan: There is no means of ascertaining who the successor of Āy Aṇḍiran was. All that we learn from the Śangam literature is that one Titiyan has been described as 'Potiyir Celvan' by the poet-king Bhūtappāṇḍiyan.[11] Whether Bhūtappāṇḍiyan waged war with Titiyan is not mentioned anywhere. But the Pāṇḍyan king seems to have come as far as Bhūtappāṇḍy, a place named after him, and where he founded a temple. Perhaps an understanding was effected between Titiyan and the Pāṇḍyan ruler, fixing Bhūtappāṇḍy as the western limit of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom. Attempts at determining the date of Bhūtappāṇḍiyan and thus of Titiyan, have not so far yielded any conclusive result. The only indisputable fact is that Titiyan was one of the successors of Aṇḍiran.

Later Āyis: Mr Sivaraja Pillai builds up a genealogy of successive generations of Āyi rulers. He suggests that Titiyan, the Potiyir Celvan, was followed by one Atikan who, in his turn, was succeeded by another Titiyan, identical with the Titiyan defeated at Talayālaṅkāṉam.[12] Lacking in conclusive evidence, these surmises are nothing, if not venturesome.[13] It is true that a village in Neyyārrinkarai Taluk bears the name Atiganūr, and that the older name of Aḷakiyapāṇḍipuram in Tōvāḷai Taluk was Atiyanūr.[14] But these etymological data cannot lead us far, especially when neither in 'Ahanānūru' (Stanza 162) nor any-

10. K. G. Sesha Aiyar—'Cēra Kings of the Śangam Period', p 129.
11. 'Ahanānūru', 25, line, 20.
12. Sivaraja Pillai "The Chronology of the Tamils", p. 147.
13. Article on "The Āyi Dynasty" by V. R. R. Dikshitar in the Report of the IXth All-India Oriental Conference.
14. T. A. S., IV, pp. 57-58; see also the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts'. Though the identification of Atikan is not certain, it is undoubted that one ruler of that name was greatly devoted to Auvai the poetess. Either his successors or subjects deified Auvai as a goddess and offered worship to her. In and around Aḷakiyapāṇḍipuram there are several shrines dedicated to Auvai.

where else is any indication found that Atikan was a ruler of the Potiyil Hills or that he belonged to the Āyi Dynasty. On the other hand, Atikan may plausibly be identified with Atikamān of Takaḍūr. Further, Titiyan, who is referred to by Nakkīrar in Stanza 36 of 'Ahanānūṟu' as a member of the confederacy at Talayālaṅkāṉam, is not definitely proved to have been an Āyi.

In the present state of our knowledge, it has to be admitted that there is a blank in the history of Āyis after Titiyan the Potiyir Celvan. But, since they reappear in the history of the 8th century A.D. it is likely that during the intervening period, the Āyis had been reduced to the position of local chieftains, probably by the Cēras in the north. The fact that the Āyi rulers of the 8th century figure in Kuṟunāḍu round about Tiruviḍaikkōḍu indicates that they had been expelled from the Potiyil Hills to this locality.[15]

It seems that during the later period of Āyi history in the West Coast, their rule extended over Nāñcināḍ, or at any rate, over the major part of it. No other ruler is mentioned in connection with the Pāṇḍya or Cōḷa battles at Kōṭṭāṟ, the chief town of Nāñcināḍ. Further, the name 'Idarāyakkuḍi' the earlier name of Iḍalākkuḍy, a suburb of Kōṭṭāṟ, suggests its association with the Āyis.

Nāñcil Porunan: However, during the Sangam Age, one Nāñcil Porunan seems to have ruled over a part of Nāñcināḍ. All that we know about him is gathered exclusively from the Tamil Classics. The Śangam poets, Marudan Iḷanāganār, Auvaiyār, Oruciṟai Periyanār and Karuvūr Kadappiḷḷai have sung about him. The commentator of 'Puṟanānūṟu' describes Porunan as Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvan. But the 'Puṟanānūṟu' speaks of him also as a Maṟava.[16] It is probable that he belonged to the Vaḷḷuva caste and that Maṟava signified a military distinction. Kandan was the personal name of the chieftain; and, although ordinarily the term Porunan denoted a king, in this particular case, it appears to have been the family name of the chieftain. This is evident from the fact that when another ruler of the Nāñcil Hills is referred to, he is

15. There is no doubt that in the 8th century, Kuṟunāḍu was the seat of their power, as is seen from the references in the Vēlvikkuḍi grant and the Madras Museum Plates. Ariviyūrkōṭṭai, Marudūr, Nelvēli, the important battlefields in the struggle between the early Pāṇḍyas and the Āyis, are all located in Kuṟunāḍu, which abutted on Nāñcināḍ. Viḻiñam, often attacked by the Pāndyas and Cōlas, was evidently a strong port of the later Āyis.

16. 'Puṟam'. Stanza 380.

merely mentioned as Porunan without any qualifying term.[17] Kandan was ruling over the Nāñcil Hills and the adjoining region.

However, it is difficult to agree with Pandit Swaminatha Aiyar, who holds that Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvan was a vassal and a friend of the Cēra ruler on the flimsy ground that the word 'Vēndar' in Stanza 139 denotes the Cēra. The lines run thus:

"Italānān Vēndē Vēndarkuc-
Cātalañcāi Nīyē"

No doubt, his position was that of a vassal. But his suzerain must have been the Pāṇḍya and not the Cēra, because the same Tamil Classic speaks of him also as "Tennavar Vayamaṟavan."[18] Is it likely that Nāñcil Porunan was the lineal descendant of a local chieftain set up in Nāñcināḍ by Bhūtappāṇḍiyan, after his successful expedition?

We do not hear of any war waged by Nāñcil Porunan; nor do we know anything about the Āyi ruler contemporaneous with him. If the Āyi king continued to exercise sway over Nāñcināḍ, his authority over the northern part of it was probably checked by Nāñcil Porunan. Evidently, the Āyi chieftain, reduced to a subordinate position by the Cēra monarch on the one hand and faced by the rise of Porunan on the other, maintained but a feeble power over Kuṟunāḍu and southern Nāñcināḍ.

What was the period of Nāñcil Porunan's rule? The only clue regarding this is afforded by the fact that Auvai, the Śangam celebrity, who has composed a poem on him, has also sung about Cēramān Māvenkō, Ugraperuvaḻiti Pāṇḍya and Rājasūyam Vēṭṭu Perunarkiḷḷi. If the chronological scheme worked out by K. G. Sesha Aiyar on the basis of Śenguṭṭuvan Gajabāhu Synchronism[19] is dependable, the 3rd century A.D., and particularly the latter half of it, may be held as the age of these sovereigns as well as of Nāñcil Porunan.

There is another reference to a Porunan, one of the five minor chiefs, who, along with the Cōḻa and Cēra sovereigns, formed a confederacy to oppose Nedumceḻiyan at Talayālaṅkāṉam.[20] Probably this Porunan was also a chief of the Nāñcil Hills. But it is difficult to ascertain his exact date or the nature of his relationship with Kandan. That, the two Porunans of the Śangam Age are not identical, is evident

17. 'Ahanānūṟu' Stanza 36.
18. 'Puṟam' Stanza 380.
19. 'Cēra Kings of the Śangam period', p. 128.
20. 'Ahanānūṟu' Stanza 36

from the facts that Kandan recognised the Pāṇḍya as his suzerain and that there is no reference whatever of any hostility between them.

Unfortunately, no further information is available about the successors of Nāñcil Porunan. It seems probable that their territory was conquered by the Pāṇdyas and held under Pāndyan sway for several succeeding centuries. Atikanūr, located at the foot of Nāñcil Hill, became transformed in name into Aḻakıyapāṇḍipuram[21] Who introduced the change, and when it was done, are not known. Perhaps one of the early Pāṇḍya sovereigns effected the conquest of northern Nāñcinād. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the Pāṇḍya monarchs of a later date like Raṇadhīra and Jaṭila Parāntaka, who waged frequent wars in the land of the Āyis, are not known to have fought any battle in northern Nāñcinād. It is not improbable that the Pāndya monarch who accomplished the conquest of northern Nāñcınād was Paśumpūṇ Pāṇḍiyan, since *Aḻakiya* may be taken as an equivalent of *Paśumpūṇ*.

Early Pāṇḍyas : The Pāṇdyas were always in contact with Nāñcinād. There is evidence to show that the whole of Nāñcinād at times, and certain regions of it during other periods, remained under Pāṇḍyan rule. For instance, Kanyākumari, the sacred village at the land's end of India, formed a part of the Pāndyan Empire for a long time Evidence, literary and epigraphic, supports the traditional association of the Pāndyas with this place of age-long fame. 'Divākaram' describes the Pāṇḍya sovereign as lord of Kumari (*Kumariccērpan*). 'Puṟanāṉūṟu' speaks of the Pāṇḍya as the lord of the Pahṟuḷı river which emptied itself into the ocean at the Cape. Indeed, it is stated that the course of the river Pahṟuḷi itself was directed by the engineering skill of the Pāṇḍyan king Vaḍimbalamba Ninṟa Neḍiyōn Pāndyan.[22] 'Maduraikkāñci' also supports the fact that the land near Kumari was under the proud possession of the Pāṇḍyas.[23] The early inscriptions again, refer to the place as included in Puṟattāyanādu, which, undoubtedly formed a part of the Pāṇḍya Empire. The Goddess Kumari was, in fact, revered as the family deity of the Pāṇdya Kings.[24] Thus there is no doubt that some time after the period of Ptolemy, Kanyā-

21. T. A. S, III, p. 57.
22 'Puṟam', Stanza 9.
23. 'Maduraikkāñci' Lines 190-205.
'தென்னவர்தம் குலதெய்வம தென்குமரி'
24. Inscription of Parāntaka Pāndya T A S, I, No III.

kumari was captured by the Pāṇḍyas; it continued to remain in their hands for several succeeding centuries.

But, while it is certain that Kanyākumari was under the Pāṇḍyas, the region to the north of it does not seem to have been under their sway all through the early period. That is evident from the frequent Pāṇḍya attacks on Kōṭṭāṟ. Most probably, as noticed earlier, this region comprising the western part of Nāñcināḍ continued to be under the feeble rule of the Āyis.

Even as early as the Śangam Age commenced the unfortunate phase of the history of Nāñcināḍ, when it became the cockpit of the South. Time and again, Pāṇḍyas invaded the land through the Āruvāymoḻi Pass. The earliest Pāṇḍyan sovereign known to have embarked on the invasion of Nāñcināḍ was the celebrated poet-king Ollaiyūr Bhūtappāṇḍiyan. Kēraḷōlpatty, in an euphemistic manner, states that one Bhūtarāya Pāndy Perumāl was chosen king by the Brahmins of Kēraḷa. Certainly, this and similar references of the Kēraḷōlpatty to the choice of kings from outside are veiled facts of conquest by the foreign monarchs. There is no means of ascertaining the extent of Bhūtappāṇḍya's conquests in Nāñcināḍ; it is not known, for instance, whether Kōṭṭāṟ and Śucīndram were brought under his power or not. In the village of Bhūtappāṇdy, about 7 miles north-east of Śucīndram, exists the ancient temple of Bhūtappāṇdiśvaramuḍaiyār. Very likely, the erection of the temple was undertaken by this Pāṇḍya king himself, as is suggested by its name.

For several centuries after the Śangam Age, the history of Nāñcināḍ, as indeed of the major part of South India, is a complete blank. It is not until we reach the 8th century A.D. that we seem to be on fairly secure ground, because, in addition to references in literature, we have the more reliable source of epigraphy to aid us. However, so far as Nāñcināḍ is concerned, even for this period, the bulk of information is confined to the Pāṇḍya invasions.

Śēndan: Among the kings mentioned in the Vēḷvikkuḍi grant, the earliest ruler who invaded Kēraḷa, and probably on the way thither Nāñcināḍ also, is Śēndan or Jayantavarman. The main basis for this inference is the fact that Śēndan assumes the surname Vāṉava, the distinctive appellation of the Cēra. At Tāḻakuḍy, five miles north-east of Śucīndram, there exists the temple of Śēndanīśvaramuḍaiyār. Popular tradition connecting this temple with Jayantavaṛman, the Pāṇḍyan king, is perhaps based on fact. Again, on the southern fringe of Aḻakiyapāṇ-

ḍipuram, is found a temple known as Jayandanārkōil. But here also, one cannot be too sure whether the name of the temple is traceable to this Pāṇḍya sovereign. Further, a village located about 3 miles south-west of Śucīndram is called Śendanputūr. It is not improbable that these places owe their names to Śēndan.

Arikēsari Māṛavarman : The next king who might have attacked Nāñcināḍ was Arikēsari Māṛavarman, figuring in the Vēḷvikkudi and the Larger Śinnamanūr Plates. Undoubtedly, he is identical with the king, famous in legend and Tamil literature as the Kūn or Sundara Pāṇḍya and as Ninra Śīr Neḍumāran, converted by Saint Sambandar. The date of this illustrious monarch is now happily settled as having ranged in the latter half of the 7th century A.D. The Vēḷvikkuḍi and Śinnamanūr Plates credit him with victories at Pāḻi, Nelvēli, Śennilam and Puliyūr and also with triumphs over the Paravās and Kuṟunāḍu. The commentary on Iraiyanār Ahapporuḷ adds that Viḻiñam, and Kōṭṭāṟ, besides several other places, were captured by him.[25] True, the historical value of the Ahapporuḷ is open to doubt; but the corroboration furnished by the plates concerning the triumph over Kuṟunāḍu, confirms that Arikēsari's conquests extended to the West Coast. [26]

Kōccaḍayan : The son and successor of Arikēsari was the famous warrior Kōccaḍayan known as Raṇādhīra who became king early in the 9th century A.D. Daring and ambitious, he waged several wars with the neighbouring rulers. His assumption of the titles of 'Vāṉavan,' 'Śembiyan', 'Cōḻan' and 'Kongarkōn' suggests his triumph over these monarchs. Among his exploits, a victory against an Āyi Vēl at Marudūr is mentioned by the Vēlvikkuḍi grant. The vanquished king must have been the contemporary Āyi ruler, an ancestor of Kōkkaruṇandaḍakkan. Several writers have identified Marudūr with Tiruppuḍaimarudūr near Ambāsamudram. This seems unsustainable. Ambāsamudram was within the heart of the Pāṇḍyan territory, and a battle with the Āyi chief, could not have been fought there, unless the Āyi had tried to beard the lion in its own den. Obviously, Raṇadhīra a valiant warrior, would not have waited for an attack near his own capital by the petty Āyi ruler. Marudūr may be more reasonably identified with Marudattūr in Kuṟu-

25. Stanzas 10 and 156.

26. Nelvēli, identified with Tirunelvēli by the stalwart epigraphists Dr. Hultzch and Venkayya, may be more appropriately identified with Nelvēli in Kuṟunādu the stronghold of the Āyis. See T. A. S., III, p. 204. Contra · K. V. S. Aiyar : Historical Sketches of the Deccan p. 40.

nāḍu.[27] It is significant that the temple of Tıruviḍaikkōttu Mahādēva itself is in Marudattūr. And, Tiruviḍaikkōḍu was the seat of the Āyis of thıs period.[28]

The Vēḷvikkuḍi Plates refer to two other victories of Kōccadayan over Āyi Vēḷ, one at Śengoḍi and another at Pudāṅkōdu But Mr. Krıshna Sastry suggests that these names denote only the regalıa of the Āyı kıng and not battlefields.[29] This surmıse has been made only because of hıs failure to identıfy the places. Both Śengodı and Pudāṅkōḍu are really two villages in Kurunāḍu.[30] Though no battle ıs specıfied to have been fought on the soıl of Nāñcināḍ, the defeat of its ruler the Āyi must have meant the triumph over Nāñcināḍ, as well.

Jaṭıla Parāntaka: Kōccaḍayan's grandson, Jaṭila Parāntaka, the Māṟan Caḍayan of the Ānamalai ınscriptıon, undertook a much more organised attack on the Āyi Vēḷ. The Vēḷvıkkuḍi Plates, besıdes referring to several other early exploits of Jaṭıla Parāntaka, record also his vıctory at Nāṭṭukkuṟumbu over an Āyi Vēl, who headed a rebellıon of the Kuṟumbas. Who were the Kuṟumbas and who was this Āyi Vēḷ? Could they have been kınsmen of the Vēḷir, whose seat of power lay near the modern Pudukkottah State or does the reference apply only to the Āyi Vēl and his subjects of Kuṟunādu ın South Travancore? The description given of the Vēls as Kuṟunilamannar appears to settle the identification in favour of the latter.

The Madras Museum Plates specıfically mentıon that the Āyı Vēḷ ruler, the "Vēṇ-Mannan", presumably the ruler of Vēṇād, as known

27. See T. A. S, III, p. 198. It must be added that, in common parlance, the place is known as Marudūr.

28. See T. A. S., I, p 3.

29. E. I., Vol. XVII, p. 307 notes 2 and 3. See also K. A. N. Sastry 'The Pāndyan Kingdom', p. 56 footnote.

30 I am indebted to Mr. S. Desikavinayakam Pillay for this identification of these two places. Śengodı ıs a vıllage near Tiruvattār. (See T. A S., III, p. 118 and p. 130). Pudāṅkōdu seems to be another form of the name Tıruvıtāṅkōdu, a vıllage in Kurunādu. Very likely, it is identical wıth the place referred to as Tirumutāṅkōdu in a Vatteḻuttu inscriptıon of the 10th century (see T. A. S., III, p. 176). Mudāṅkōḍu may be an alternative form of Pudāṅkōdu; or perhaps, it is a case of error in the text It may be noticed that ın Vatteḻuttu, ㄩ and ஐ are written almost alıke. In further support of the identıfication of Pudāṅkōdu of the Vēlvikkudi grant with Tirumutāṅkōdu or Tiruvitāṅkōdu of Kuṟunādu, it may be mentioned that ın the latter regıon, numerous places bear names endıng in kōdu, e.g., Kattimāṅkōḍu, Nettayāṅkōdu, Mēlāṅkōdu, Karincāṅkōdu, Tıkkanakodu, Pullālankōḍu, Tiruvidaikkōdu and Viḷavaṅkōdu.

later, was defeated and put to death, that his town " Viḻiñam " was destroyed and that "his elephants, horses, family, treasure and good country" were captured.[31] This glorious victory over the Vēṇ-Mannan must have been won by Māran Caḍayan before the 17th year of his rule, because the Madras Museum Plates record his martial career only up to that stage.

But Māṛan Caḍayan was not left in peace. In the 23rd year of his rule, he was again obliged to march against Caḍayan Karuṇandan of "Malai-nāḍu", and it is recorded that he defeated the rebel and destroyed Arıviyūrkōṭṭai.[32] Doubtless, Cadayan Karuṇandan was the Āyi Vēḷ ruler; obviously, he was the successor of the king killed earlier at Viḻiñam. After his accession, Cadayan Karunandan might have defied the Pāṇḍyan power necessitating a fresh attack by Māṛan Caḍayan Caḍayan Karuṇandan was the father of Kōkkaruṇandaḍakkan of the Huzur Office Plates ; his name, as well as the known details about him, leave no room for doubt on the matter.

A third attack on Malai-nāḍu by Māṛan Cadayan occurred about the 27th year of his reign. This is learnt from the Trivandrum Stone inscription,[33] which states that the Cēra army was able to pursue Māṛan Caḍayan as far as Karaikkōṭṭai.[34] Probably the Cēra ruler had come to the aid of the Āyi Vēl, and now the tables were turned on the Pāṇḍya.

Śrī Māra Śrī Vallabha : Māṛan Caḍayan's successor, Śrī Māra Śrī Vallabha entered on an aggressive warfare against the Cēra ruler. The glowing account of his conquests recorded in the Larger Śinnamanūr Plates, at first sight, seems to be either a fantastic eulogy or an exaggeration of minor victories. But, when, with reference to the conflict with the Cēra, the names of battlefields are mentioned as Kunnūr and Viḻiñam, the element of probability gains preponderance. Since Viḻiñam was one of the places attacked by the Pāṇḍya, a war must have been fought either with the Āyi Vēḷ king (Vēṇ-Mannan) or with the combined forces of the Cēra and of the Āyi Vēḷ. Kunnūr may be identified with the place of that name very near Kollam ; it indicates that the

31. Evidently the term " Vēn-Mannan " points to the derivation of Vēnād as Vēl + Nād. See T. A. S., I, p. 188.

32. This place may be identified with Aruvikkarai in Kuṟunāḍu — See T. A. S., III, p. 204.

33. T. A. S., I, p. 158.

34 Karaikkōṭtai refers to Āruvāimoḻi. Even today, the latter place is spoken of as Kōṭṭaikkarai. To identify Karaikkōttai with Kāraikkudi, as some historians of Travancore have done, is to go too far.

Pāṇḍya had plunged far into the interior. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that he attacked any place in Nāñcinād. The fact that Viḻiñam and, still farther north, Kunnūr are mentioned as the scenes of conflict, suggests that Nāñcinād was not actively defended by the Āyis and that probably the Pāṇḍyan authority was tacitly recognised there.

Perhaps the fragmentary inscription of one Caḍayan Māṛan in Śucīndram,[35] dated 8th year Simha, is ascribable to the period of Śrī Māra Śrī Vallabha. He was a son of Māṛan Cadyan, and hence the name Caḍayan Māṛan confirms the suggestion. Further, the palaeography of the fragmentary inscription, as also the manner of dating the regnal year, suggest that it belongs to a date earlier than that of Rājasimha Caḍayan Māṛan, the famous donor of the Larger Śinnamanūr Plates.

Vīra Nārāyaṇa Caḍayan, Rājasimha and the decline of the Pāṇḍya power : While little is known about Varaguṇa Varman, the successor of Śrī Māra Śrī Vallabha, the ruler Vīra Nārāyaṇa Caḍayan, who succeeded his brother Varaguṇa Varma on the throne about 880 A.D., appears to have been actively connected with Śucīndram. Some of the very early inscriptions in the temple, most probably, belong to his reign. A significant fact is that the endowments were made by one who was the chief minister and general of the Pāṇḍya sovereign, Māṛan Caḍayan, as Vīra Nārāyaṇa was called. The Śinnamanūr Plates state that this monarch endowed many agrahārās and numberless dēvasthānams and taṭākas. It is likely that Śucīndram was one of the sacred places patronised by him. The fact that the Śucīndram inscriptions of his period bear the regnal years of his reign is a clear indicator that the locality was under his sway. Vīranārāyaṇaśśēri and Vīranārāyaṇamangalam, two villages not far away from Śucīndram, perhaps owe their names to this Pāṇḍya sovereign. That he had Śri Vāṉavan Mahādēvī, evidently a Cēra Princess as his queen, suggests his close contact with Kēraḷa.

About 900 A.D. Vīranārāyaṇa was succeeded by Rājasimha the celebrated donor of the Larger Śinnamanūr Plates. Evidently, he continued to be in possession of Śucīndram and perhaps of a part of Nāñcinād, at least till the 16th year of his reign, as is learnt from his epigraphs.[36] But Rājasimhā's power and, with that, the supremacy of the Early Pāṇḍyas were crushed by Parāntaka Cōḷa.

The Cōḷas : Next the Cōḷas began to attack Nāñcinād. No information, however, is available about any battle fought in the 10th century A.D.,

35 T. A. R., 22 of 1090 M. E.
36. T A. S., IV, pp. 121-123.

though the inscriptions bearing the regnal years of Parāntaka I (907-953 A.D.) are found at Śucīndram,[37] indicating that the locality had come under his sway.

But the Cōḷa contact witnessed a breakdown for a moment. Towards the end of Parāntaka's reign, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas invaded the Cōḷa country with a huge host, and during the period of consequent confusion, a certain Vīra Pāṇḍya, belonging to the royal line of Pāṇḍyas, rose to eminence and claimed to have 'taken the head of the Cōḷa.' It is not possible to identify the Cōḷa king who was beheaded by Vīra Pāṇḍya ; but his claim, which he parades in all his inscriptions commencing from his 6th year, does not seem to have been an empty boast. At any rate, that his rule was recognised to the south of Madurai is evident from his inscriptions, five of which are found in Śucīndram.[38] However, Vīra Pāṇḍya did not succeed in re-establishing Pāndyan supremacy in the extreme south except for a short spell of about twenty years. Āditya, the son of Parāntaka Cōḷa II, turned the tables on Vīra Pāṇḍya and captured and executed him.[39]

Rāja Rāja the Great : In fact, it was not until the advent of Rāja Rāja in 985 A.D. that there commenced an organised invasion of Nāñcināḍ by the Cōḷa power. An ambitious and masterly ruler, Rāja Rāja was bent upon carrying his arms to distant lands. Records of his exploits commencing from his 4th regnal year are now available.[40]

A preliminary question demands attention. Did he attack first the Pāṇḍya country proper or the regions of the West Coast including Nāñcināḍ ? The Tiruvālangāḍu Plates, as also Rāja Rāja's inscription dated the 20th year, mention first the attack and destruction of Madurai, and then the capture of Viḻiñam, the conquest of Kuḍanāḍu and so on. Obviously, that would have been the natural sequence, since the Pāṇḍya power was close at hand. It is, however, urged that in the praśastis, the reference to Kāndaḷūr-Śālai occurs first, that this is found mentioned in the earlier inscriptions and that Rāja Rāja's epigraphs appear in South Travancore two years earlier than in Tirunelvēli and beyond. On the basis of these pieces of cumulative evidence, it is argued that his invasion of Nāñcināḍ and of the Cēra dominions must have preceded the campaign against Madurai. But it has to be observed that the order

37. E. I., V, pp. 42-43.
38. T. A. S., III, pp 69-74.
39. A. R. E. 472 of 1908.
40. A. R. E. 395 of 1922.

of the exploits adopted in the praśastis need not have strictly conformed to the chronological sequence, the more impressive or difficult achievement is apt to be mentioned earlier. Further, it is still open to doubt whether the reference to Kāndaḷūr-Śālai pertained to a victory. Thus, the conclusion that the capture of Madurai came first, then a march through Tirunelvēli and Nāñcināḍ and later the attack on Viḻiñam and places beyond, is most natural.

The earliest of the inscriptions of Rāja Rāja, so far discovered in Nāñcināḍ, is that of his 8th year in Darśanamkōpe, his epigraphs at Śucīndram commencing only with his 10th year.[41] However, it is between the 10th and 14th year of his reign that the definite organisation of Nāñcināḍ under Cōla supremacy seems to have been undertaken. This is inferred from the fact that, while the Śucīndram inscription of his 10th year describes the place merely as 'Nāñcināṭṭu Tiruccivīndiram,' that of the 14th year speaks of it as 'Rājarāja Valanāṭṭu Tiruccivīndiram.' In the still later Cōḷa inscriptions Nāñcināḍ was described as a subdivision of 'Uttamacōḷa Vaḷanādu' which, in its turn, was a district of 'Rājarāja Pāṇḍinādu.'[42] The introduction of these designations indicates the increasing influence of the 'cōḷanisation' of Nāñcināḍ.

Nor were the activities of the illustrious Rāja Rāja confined to the temporal sphere. Wherever he went, he seems to have aimed at ennobling the temple as the pivot of social and religious life. Bestowal of gifts on temples, organisation of Brahmin feeding, the establishment of the institution of Dēvadāsis, the insistence on the practice of singing devotional hymns from Dēvāram and Tiruvācakam, and above all, the popularisation of religious festivals and ceremonies were some of the activities, which he revelled in. A master-builder of temples, Rāja Rāja holds also a unique place as the ruler who organised the practices and celebrations of the temple in South India. The lofty position to which the temple was ennobled as a social institution, stood the test of time during the succeeding centuries and became the dominant feature

41. There is no doubt that Putugrāmam, the hamlet, three miles to the north of Śucīndram, came under the active influence of Rāja Rāja, a fact evident from the transformation of the name into 'Rāja Nārāyana Caturvēdimangalam' (T. A. S., Vol. VI, p. 188). Nagamiah's wild guesses that the change in the name of the village was effected either by a descendant of Nāñcikkuṟavan or by Kulōttunga I (State Manual, I, p. 264) are outside the mark. The fact that one of the surnames of Rāja Rāja was Cōla Nārāyana (see the Mysore Archaeological Report for 1917 p. 42) leaves no room for doubt Evidently the village was a brahmadēya established in the reign of Rāja Rāja.

42 See T A. S., Vol. VI, pp 1 to 6.

of the social history of South India. The Śucīndram pagoda too, seems to have come under the wholesome influence of his reforming hand.[43]

Rājēndra: Rājēndra, the worthy son of Rāja Rāja, carried forward the triumphant Cōḷa banner. In Nāñcināḍ, he devoted his attention to the strengthening of the Cōḷa authority. The Śiva temple at Cōḷapuram, barely three miles away from Śucīndram, was constructed by one of the officials of Rājēndra and was christened 'Rājēndracōḷīśvaram'.[44] Some of his epigraphs are found at Cape Comorin and Tērūr. Śucīndram did not fail to receive his patronage; the inscription at the base of the garbhagṛha of Tekkēdam undoubtedly belongs to his reign. That Rājēndra's activities extended far to the north of Nāñcināḍ is evident from the rechristening of Viḻiñam as Rājēndracōḷapaṭṭiṇam.[45]

Not less striking than Rājēndra's martial prowess was his statesmanship seen in his creation of the Cōḷa Pāṇḍya Viceregal system. Realising that the Pāṇḍyas incessantly proved refractory, he organised this scheme of effective consolidation of the Cōḷa authority.[46] For nearly half a century, the southern part of the old Pāṇḍyan Kingdom including Nāñcināḍ, was governed by the Cōla Pāṇḍya Viceroys, concerning four of whom, epigraphic records are available[47]

Jaṭāvarman Sundaracōla Pāṇḍya: The earliest of these Viceroys was Rājēndra's son Jaṭāvarman Sundaracōla Pāṇḍya. He was appointed Viceroy of the extreme south in 1018 or 1019 A.D. Epigraphs bearing his name are found in Tiruvitāṅkōḍe,[48] in Cōlapuram[49] and in Śucīndram,[50] besides a considerable number of them in the Tirunelvēli District. The Tiruvitāṅkōde inscription shows that his authority extended up to Kuṟunāḍu. The Śucīndram record is particularly interesting since the village was also described as Sundaracōla-caturvēdimangalam, obviously after the Viceroy himself.

Jaṭāvarman Uḍaiyār Śri Cōḷa Pāṇḍya: The only other Cōla Pāṇḍya Viceroy connected with Śucīndram is Jaṭāvarman Uḍaiyār Śrī Cōḷa Pāṇḍya Dēva, probably identical with the Prince Gangaikoṇḍa Cōḷa, appointed

43 See infra Chapters VIII and IX.
44. I. A, Vol. XX, p. 276.
45 T. A. S, III, p. 198
46. A R. E 363 of 1917.
47. See K. A N. Sastry · 'The Cōlas' Vol. I, Appendix pp 608-18; (T. A. S, Vol. VI, pp. 6-7 and E. I. Vol. III, p. 292)
48. T. A. S, IV, pp. 140-41.
49. Idem., VI, pp. 8-13.
50. Idem., IV, p. 136

as Viceroy by Vīra Rājēndra. Three lithic records of his period are found in Śucīndram, the last of which is dated in the 25th year of his rule, thus indicating a long period of viceroyalty. Two inscriptions of Māṟavarman Uḍaiyār Śri Vikrama, a later Viceroy, are found at Kanyākumari; and it is likely that a village Āḷūr 7 miles north-west of Śucīndram, surnamed as Vikrama Cōḷa Pāṇḍyapuram, owes the new-fangled name to this Viceroy. The exact dates of the rule of Viceroys in the south have not yet been definitely settled.

Kulōttunga I : The Viceregal system did not continue after the accession of Kulōttunga in 1070 A.D.[51] Evidently the Viceroys were in charge of the southernmost part of the Cōla Empire from about 1019 to 1070 A.D. After Rājēndra the next Cōḷa Emperor figuring prominently in the history of Nāñcināḍ is Kulōttunga.

Kulōttunga, the first Cāḷukya Cōḷa Emperor, tried to infuse fresh vigour into the imperial power. Several campaigns were undertaken by him in accordance with a calculated plan. No doubt, he lost Vēngi; but, without wasting his resources on the chimerical project of its recovery, he concentrated his efforts on the strengthening of his empire in the south and west.

Both literary and epigraphic sources furnish details of his southern campaigns. The inscription at Tirukkaḻukkunṟam[52] states how he defeated and drove away " the five Pāṇḍyas, " seized the pearl fisheries as well as the Potiyil region and burnt Kōṭṭāṟu. The 'Vikramaśōḷan Ulā,' in essence, confirms this version,[53] while the 'Kaliṅgattupparaṇi' furnishes the additional fact that the port of Viḻiñam, as also Kāndaḷūr-Śālai, were destroyed.

Not less notable was the plan he introduced for the effective maintenance of the conquered territories. He stationed a number of military colonies (nilappaḍai) along the important routes of communication, and it is noteworthy that among these settlements, one was at Kōṭṭāṟ.[54] But, excepting the establishment of the military outposts and the arrangement made for the collection of tribute from the conquered regions, no interference with the internal administration appears to have been attempted. In Nāñcināḍ, inscriptions of his period are found at Cōḷapuram, Agastīśvaram, Śucīndram, Vāriyūr and Kanyākumari.

51. E. I., Vol. XI, p. 293 note.
52. S. I. I., III, p 147.
53. Lines 46-48.
54. T. A. S., Vol. I, p. 287

Parāntaka Pāṇḍya : During Kulōttunga's reign, disasters befell the Cōḷa power in the north, and the extent of the empire became greatly circumscribed on account of the successes of the Hōyasālas and the Western Cāḷukyas. It was about this time that a Pāṇḍyan king Parāntaka seems to have risen to eminence in the extreme south. All that we know about Parāntaka is learnt from his own inscription at Kanyākumari.[55] He is ascribed to this period only because of the references in the epigraph to the capture of Kulam of the Telinga Bhīma and the subjugation of South Kalinga, both identical with those subdued by Vikrama Cōḷa, the son of Kulōttunga. It is probable that, as a feudatory of the Cōḷa Empire, Parāntaka helped Vikrama Cōla in this expedition. Parāntaka Pāṇḍya records in the epigraph many more striking victories. He professes to have defeated the Cēra and Kūpaka rulers and to have captured Viḻiñam and Kāndaḷūr-Śalai. The inscription goes on to record how the king organised new weights and measures, administered efficient justice, set up ten beautiful golden lamps for the God at Anantapuram and on top of all, states that he ruled over all the quarters of the globe. Obviously, wild exaggerations vitiate the value of the inscription. But even supposing that some of his claims were real, there is no reference to the conquest of Śucīndram, Kōṭṭār or any place in Nāñcināḍ. Perhaps he undertook only a march from Kanyākumari towards Trivandrum and won triumphs at Viḻiñam and Kāndaḷūr-Śālai.

Vēṇāḍ Kings : Besides, Kulōttunga's reign witnessed in Nāñcināḍ the appearance of another factor, or rather, of an old factor in a rejuvenated form. This was none other than the Vēṇāḍ power, which established its supremacy over a considerable part of Nāñcināḍ about this time. The enfeebled condition of the Cōḷa authority in the south afforded a splendid opportunity for the Vēṇāḍ kings.[56] However, it is not easy to ascertain the identity of the king who accomplished the feat ; but, about the time of the accredited establishment of the Vēṇāḍ supremacy, the king of the dynasty was Vīra Kēraḷa Varman, and it is not unlikely that he was the hero of the achievement.

There is a confused mass of legend regarding the establishment of Vēṇāḍ supremacy in the first quarter of the 12th century A.D. It is said that there is an inscription engraved on the granite base of the Pāṇḍyan Aṇai or the dam of the Paraḷi, which records this achieve-

55. T. A. S., I., No. III, pp. 5-6.
56. I A., Vol. XX, p. 281.

ment. The inscription, however, has not been so far published, and no one positively claims to have seen it. That epigraph is believed to state that in 292 M.E. (1116 A.D.) a Kūpaka king conquered Kōṭṭār and the whole of Nāñcināḍ from the Pāṇḍyan king Rājasimha.[57] A popular ballad current in Nāñcināḍ commemorates this event[58] Above all, Nagamiah states that the Manuscript Records in the Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum advert to this incident,[59] although the date of the event entered therein is 282 M.E., which probably is a slip for 292 M.E.

Obviously some serious doubts are bound to arise. Is the Kūpaka king, the accredited victor, identical with Vīrakērala Varma of Vēnāḍ? Who was Rājasimha the vanquished Pāṇḍya king? Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai says that the "Vēnāḍ kings are often described as belonging to the Kūpaka dynasty."[60] If this is true, it may be tentatively accepted that Vīra Kēraḷa was the victor. But the difficulty in identifying Rājasimha seems insurmountable. None of the sources of information furnishes the faintest trace of a ruler of that name during this period. Further, Parāntaka Pāṇḍya who claims stupendous achievements for himself, among which are included the defeat of the Kūpaka and Cēra kings, must have also ruled about 1120 A.D. How is it possible to reconcile these conflicting claims?

The Nāñcikkuṟavan episode: Unfortunately, another factor clouds the issue still further. Mr. Shankunny Menon says that, during the Muhammadan rule of the Pāṇḍyan Kingdom, one Nāñcikkuṟavan, a feudatory chief under Travancore, obtained possession of Nāñcināḍ and established himself as a ruler. He adds that in 292 M.E. (1116 A.D.) Nāñcikkuṟavan and his confederacy were driven away by the king of Travancore.[61] Mr. Nagamiah has uncritically repeated the account.

57 Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol I, p 251.

58 It runs thus:

"எத்திசையும் புகழ்படைத்த கொல்லம் இருநூற்றித் தொண்ணூற்றிரண்டா
வெற்றி செய்யும் கும்பத்தில் வியாழநின்ற விளங்கு [மாண்டு
திங்களாவணிபன்னொன்றுந்தேதி
தண்ணி விழும்பறளை யாற்றணை யுந்தள்ளித் தமிழ் பாண்டிராஜ சிங்கன்ற
வென்று கொத்தலரும பூஞ்சோலை நாஞ்சிநாடும் கோட்டாறும் [னையும்
கூவையர்கோன் கொண்டவாறே"

59 Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 377.

60. T. K. Velu Pillai State Manual, Vol. II, p 294.

61. Shankunny Menon · 'History of Travancore', p. 92

And Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai is content with merely stating thus: — "It is said that the king (Vīra Kērala Varma) defeated Nāñcikkuṟavan, a chieftain of Nāñcināḍ, who exercised influence over the villages, Cape Comorin, Śucīndram etc., and annexed his possessions."[62]

Details about Nāñcikkuṟavan and his supposed rule are described at length by Mr. Nagamiah.[63] He narrates how Kōṉanki Kuṟavan, the founder of the dynasty, was an alchemist, how he succeeded in establishing his sway over Kōṭṭāṟ, Śucīndram and other places, and how, after him, his successors ruled over these regions for many centuries. Regarding the expulsion of the last member of the Kuṟava dynasty, there is a discrepancy between the accounts of Shankunny Menon and Nagamiah. The latter writer, basing his version entirely on the legend narrated to him by one Sivan Pillay of Padmanābhapuram, states[64] that it was the Mudaliyār steward of the Kuṟava chief who got rid of his suzerain and established a Commonwealth of the people. Shankunny Menon, on the other hand, holds that the Kuṟava chief was expelled by the Travancore sovereign in 292 M.E. We are thus faced with conflicting versions. The only fact which seems acceptable is the defeat of a Pāṇḍyan king by the Travancore ruler about 292 M.E. (1116 A.D.), because it is also mentioned in the Padmanābhasvāmy Temple Records.[65]

About the Nāñcikkuṟavan episode, it seems that the legend-monger's ingenuity has been freely at work. All the writers quoted above, have uncritically drawn in upon the account furnished by Mackenzie in his Manuscripts. But the only source for Mackenzie was the legendary version supplied to him by one Aṉṉāvi of Kōṭṭāṟ.

It is not improbable that the story was originally invented by some member of the Periya Vīṭṭu Mudaliyār family. Having immigrated from beyond the Ghats at an early date, the ancestor of the family attained an eminent position and became virtually the leader of Nāñcināḍ. A later member of the family might have tried to invent a

62 T. K. Velu Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 76.

63. Nagamiah· State Manual, Vol. I, pp 262-63.

64 Idem, Vol II, pp. 373-74.

65. A peculiar feature of the historians of Travancore has been to invoke the "Temple Records", which, to others were sealed books. Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai has done a signal service to the historiography of Travancore by publishing a copy of the important Matilakom Records as an Appendix to his State Manual, Vol. II. Regarding the triumph of the Kūpaka in 292 M.E., however, his collection does not contain the relevant record.

mythical association for his ancestor with an imaginary ruler, the Nāñcikkuṟavan.[66]

Probably the references to Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvan or Porunan in the Tamil Classic furnished the basis for the development of the myth of a later Nāñcikkuṟavan. The fact that Porunan had his seat of power on the Nāñcil Hills located very near Aḻakiyapāṇḍipuram might have provided the cue. It is pertinent to observe that the name of Kuṟattiyaṟai, a village within a mile of Aḻakiyapāṇḍipuram, appears to have been a mythological perversion, for the village is referred to as Kuśattiyaṟai in a palm-leaf document as early as 651 M.E. (1476 A.D.)[67]

The chronological incompatibility is itself a serious weakness. It is stated that it was during the Muhammadan rule of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom that Nāñcikkuṟavan established his power and that eventually his descendant was expelled by the Travancore king in 1117 A.D. But, absolutely no evidence of a Muslim invasion of South India earlier than 1310 A.D. is available. How then can this disparity of over two centuries be reconciled ? On the whole, the authenticity of the Nāñcikkuṟavan episode is extremely doubtful.

Vēṇāḍ Supremacy : It is, however, an incontrovertible fact that the authority of the Vēṇāḍ king was established over certain parts of Nāñcināḍ by the first quarter of the 12th century A.D. Vīra Kērala's inscription of 302 M.E. (1117 A.D.) at Cōḻapuram, making over the tax from Vaḍaśēri as a gift to the temple at Rājēndra Colēśvaram substantiates it. But Sundaram Pillay's far-fetched interpretation, that it is a political peace-offering,[68] seems to overrate the real position of the Cōḻas at the time. The tax due from a locality could not have been disposed of by any but the political authority.

Further, an inscription of 301 M.E. (1126 A.D.) at Śucīndram, though silent about the ruling sovereign or his regnal year, furnishes for the first time among the Śucīndram epigraphs the date in terms of

66 In the deposition as a witness in connection with a suit in the Court at Padmanābhapuram on 10th Āni 1004 M.E. (1829 A.D.), the then head of the Mudaliyār family states that the ancestors of the Mudaliyārs came from Kaverippattinam and settled down in Aḻākiyapāndipuram, Karunkulam and Vallanādu. He adds that three members of the family at Aḻakiyapāṇḍipuram were elevated by the people as the leaders of the 12 Pidāgais of Nāñcināḍ. However, not a word about Nāñcikkuṟavan appears in the statement. (See 'Mudaliyār' Manuscripts No. 63 dated 10th Āni 1004 M.E.).

67. 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' No. 6.

68. Sundaram Pillay — 'Early Sovereigns of Travancore', p. 15.

the Kollam Era. This circumstance suggests the dominance of the West Coast power, obviously of the Vēṇāḍ ruler, over the locality. Moreover, Śucīndram is described in an inscription as Vīra Kēralacaturvēdimangalam.[69] Perhaps the author of this new-fangled surname was the Vīra Kēraḷa of the 12th century. Finally, if the palm-leaf record, now in the possession of Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar,[70] stated to be a copy of the original, bearing the date 6th Mēḍa 305 M.E. (1130 A.D.), is dependable, as it seems to be, it furnishes a confirmation of Vīra Kērala's authority over Śucīndram.

An inscription of Vīra Kērala dated 319 M.E. (1144 A.D.) found in Tiruvallam, shows that this king continued to rule at that date. But there appears in Śucīndram an epigraph of Māravarman Śrī Vallabha, the Pāndyan king, ascribable to this period. Also, at Puravaśśēri and Kalladaikkuṟicci, records of the same king have been discovered. But the unfortunate feature about them all is that their exact dates are not ascertainable.[71] However, on palaeographic grounds and on the basis of the pattern of the introduction adopted in his inscriptions, the king may be ascribed to the 12th century A.D.

Did he establish his authority in Śucīndram, Puravaśśēri and the neighbouring places, as at first sight, his inscriptions would have us believe? Some writers have actually adopted that view, holding that Vīra Ravi Ravivarman, the Vēnād king, was a feudatory of Śrī Vallabha.[72] But Nagamiah has gone a step further and hazarded the view that Māravarman Śrī Vallabha ruled over Tirunelvēli as well as North Travancore, identifying these places with the Kīḻ-Vēmbanād and Mēl-Vēmbanād respectively, occurring in the king's inscriptions. Apparently, he has been misled by the name Vēmbanādu which denotes a part of North Travancore. True, Tirunelvēli was described as situated in Kīḻ-Vēmbanād. But the identification of Mēl-Vēmbanāḍ with North Travancore is unsustainable; it denoted only the region just to the west of Tirunelvēli town. This is evident from another South Indian inscription, where a place 'Kōdalūr' immediately to the west of Tirunelvēli, is spoken of as a part of Mēl-Vēmbanād. *'Mēl-Vēmbanāṭṭu Kōdalūrāna*

69. Inscription in the Krsnasvāmy Kōil dated 29th Māśi, 865 M.E.

70. T. A. R. of 1103 M.E.

71. K. A N. Sastry's suggestion ("Pāndyan Kingdom", p. 126) that his accession might be dated in 1132 A.D. is, as he himself admits, open to doubt.

72. K. A. N. Sastry "Pāndyan Kingdom", p. 125; and Sewell's Historical Inscriptions, p. 112.

Kulaśēkharaccaturvēdimangalam.'[73] And Kōdalūr is none other than Kōdakanallūr.[74]

Regarding Śrī Vallabha's alleged supremacy over Vēṇāḍ or Nāñcināḍ, the available data do not warrant that conclusion. The lands bestowed on the temples in Nāñcināḍ were located in Purattāyanāḍu, which undoubtedly formed part of the Pāṇḍya Empire. The endowment to the Śucīndram temple was made by the king while residing at Rājarājaccaturvēdimangalam in Mulli-Nāḍu, and that, on the request of the members of the Śucīndram Sabha Above all, it is significant that the Sabha described Śucīndram as their own village. *'Tangaḷūr Śucīndramudaiya mahādēvar kōyilil.'* An endowment to a temple by itself is no indication of the political supremacy of the donor over the place of its location.

Another poser appears in the Śucīndram inscription. The name of the village is recorded as 'Sundarapāṇḍyacaturvēdimangalam'. At first sight, this seems to prove Pāṇḍya domination over the place. But Śrī Vallabha is not known to have had the surname of Sundara. Nor did any Pāṇḍya sovereign, bearing that name, figure in Śucīndram or Nāñcināḍ earlier. Śucīndram was, no doubt, described as Śundaracōḷapāṇḍyacaturvēdimangalam' after the first Cōḷa-Pāṇḍya Viceroy. Is the change of name appearing in Śrī Vallabha's inscription merely the result of a slip on the part of the engraver ? Perhaps it is.

Kōda-Kēraḷa Varma : It is, however, clear that Vīra Kēraḷa's reign must have terminated before 320 M.E. (1145 A.D.) since the inscription of Kōda Kēraḷavarma of that year is found in Śucīndram itself. That epigraph and also two others of his at Śucīndram indicate that his sway extended over South Nāñcināḍ. One of the earliest patrons of the Śucīndram temple among the rulers of Vēnād, he has bestowed on it extensive lands. It is significant that the paddy lands settled by him on the temple belonged not only to Śucīndram but to the adjoining villages like Kakkād and Tenvalanallūr.

Śrī Vīra Ravi Varma : Śrī Vīra Ravi Varma, the successor of Kōda Kēraḷavarma, extended his authority to the eastern part of Nāñcināḍ also. This is learnt from his inscription of 336 M.E., which records his gifts of lands in Tāḷakuḍy to the Puravaśśēri temple.[75] This epigraph discloses the interesting fact that the affairs of Nāñcināḍ were administered by a triumvirate of royal officers. Not less remarkable is the infor-

73. S I. I., Vol V, p. 161.
74. Vide Nos. 203 and 204 of M E.R. 1933.
75. See Sundaram Pillay · "Early Sovereigns of Travancore", p. 21.

mation revealed about the village organizations. We learn that the people of Tāḻakuḍy had the right to execute and to ratify the royal grants The king thus recognized and utilized the popular institutions in the administration of the land.

Popular Institutions: In Nāñcināḍ and Vēṇāḍ, during the 12th and 13th centuries, as indeed for a long time later, the local assemblies and temple sabhas were virile institutions; and the day-to-day affairs were managed by them. The inscription at Veḷḷāyini of 1196 A.D., another at Trivandrum of 1209 A.D. and yet another at Manalikkara of 1235 A.D.[76], all indicate that the local affairs were under the purview of the assemblies. But Sundaram Pillay, and following him others, seem inclined to overrate the importance of a body under the name of the "Six Hundred" entrusted with the supervision of temples. In the first place, the name is not always indicative of its numerical strength.[77] Secondly, except in brahmadēyās, the affairs of the temple were not the only concern of villages. Without knowing the other functions of the "Six Hundred", to postulate a theory of popular government is to read too much into names.

Udayamārtaṇḍavarma · The next Vēṇāḍ ruler of importance connected with the history of Śucīndram was Udayamārtaṇḍavarma of the 4th century M.E. or 12th century A.D. On account of the illegibility of his Tiruvaṭṭār inscription, there has been some doubt as to the date of his accession. Sundaram Pillay's reading of the year as 348 M.E. was questioned by Gopinatha Rao, who took it as 398 M.E.[78] But the present view has veered round to that of Sundaram Pillay's reading. This is reinforced by the fact that an inscription of Udayamārtāṇḍavarma's successor Ādityavarma, belonging to 368 M.E., has been discovered. Udayamārtāṇḍavarma, as will be seen later,[79] appears to have been actively associated with the construction of the Ardhamaṇḍapa of the temple at Śucīndram.

The 13th and 14th centuries witnessed the rule of notable monarchs, succeeding one another. One peculiar feature which, incidentally, presents serious difficulties to the historian is the system of co-partnership or the practice of junior members of the royal family being associated

76. T. K. Velu Pillai State Manual, II, pp. 85-92.

77. There are similar names with reference to other places like the "Three Hundred of Śucīndram," the "Three Thousand of Tillai" and the "Five Hundred Brahmins of Tiruviḻimalai."

78. T. A. S, 1, p. 296

79. Infra — Chapter V.

with the ruling sovereign. Since, in addition to this fact, the names of three different families to which the rulers belonged are mentioned, the position, in several instances, becomes distressingly complex. Nagamiah says "Two or more kings of the same dynasty are mentioned as ruling at the same time. It may be that both were independent chiefs over small tracts. Or it may be that the senior associated the junior with him in Governmental affairs."

Early in the 14th century A D , the famous conqueror, Ravivarman Kulaśēkhara, who was ruling at Quilon undertook a bold campaign in the region of the Coromandel Coast. It is likely that he marched to the other side of the Ghats through the well-known Āruvāymoḻi Pass. But whether he had any specific contact with Śucīndram or not is unknown.

Parākrama Pāṇḍya : Nāñcināḍ, doubtless, continued to be under the sway of the Vēṇāḍ kings. The discovery of inscriptions in Śucīndram and Cōḷapuram of one Parākrama Pāṇḍya, however, has led Nagamiah to hazard a strange theory.[80] He holds that Parākrama Pāṇḍya, whose reign commenced about 1357 A.D., had secured possession of Nāñcināḍ and ruled over it. The Cōḷapuram inscription records that the temple of Rājēndra Cōḷēśvaram was re-constructed by Parākrama in the 15th year of his reign. The Śucīndram epigraph shows that Jaṭāvarman Parākrama Pāṇḍya instituted in the 28th year of his reign the 'Parākrama Pāṇḍya Sandhi Pūjā' for which he settled lands in Cengaḷakkuṟicci (in Tirunelvēli District). These data are enough for Nagamiah to suggest that Parākrama Pāṇḍya maintained sway over Nāñcināḍ from 1372 to 1385 A.D. For one thing, the astronomical details found in the Śucīndram record do not tally with the known facts of the 14th century Parākrama Pāṇḍya. Gopinatha Rao has proved[81] that the inscription really belongs to the 15th century Parākrama, the builder of the Viśvanāthasvāmi temple at Tenkāśi. Secondly, the Cōḷapuram inscription by itself does not prove the political supremacy of the Pāṇḍya. It records nothing more than that the temple of Rājēndra Cōḷēśvaram was re-constructed by Parākrama Pāṇḍya.[82] Noteworthy is the fact that the epigraph is not dated in terms of his reign. Moreover, it must be repeated that benefactions to temples were above dynastic disputes and belligerent enterprises.

80. State Manual, Vol. I, p. 265.
81. T. A. S , I, p. 281.
82. Idem, VI, p. 28

Having hazarded that Parākrama Pāṇḍya conquered and ruled Nāñcinād for 13 years, Nagamiah makes Śrī Vīra Ravi Varma, the Vēṇād king reigning in 1383 A.D., the recoverer of the region. Neither the first conquest nor the re-conquest is definitely proved. True, the chronicles of the Padmanābhasvāmy temple mention that Ravi Varma made certain gifts to the temple in 592 M.E. (1416 A.D.) as an atonement for the havoc caused in the war at Karuvēlankuḷam. But this war was probably an aggressive exploit on the part of the Vēṇāḍ ruler. With the enfeebled position of the Pāṇḍyā, instead of Nāñcināḍ, the region to the east of Āruvāimoḻi happened to be the bone of contention. In fact, for several succeeding centuries, Vēṇāḍ kings held sway over Vaḷḷiyūr and Nāngunēri.

In the latter half of the 14th century, the Pāṇḍyas lost their hold on the Madurai country and found their authority restricted to the extreme south. No doubt, some of the later Pāṇḍyas occasionally patronized temples in Nāñcināḍ. An inscription of Māravarman Vīra Pāṇḍya, and another of Arikēsari Parākrama appear in the Śucīndram pagoda. But, though dated in their respective regnal years, these records of pious endowments cannot be taken as proof of their political supremacy over the place.

Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma : Further, it must be observed that this period synchronized with the rule of one of the powerful kings of Vēṇāḍ. Shankunny Menon states that Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma who ruled from 558 to 619 M.E. (1383-1444 A.D.), had the longest reign in Travancore History. Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai confirms the statement on the basis of the Temple Records and adds that Vīra Ravi Varma, heard of during the period, was only a junior prince. " Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma ruled over territories on both sides of the Ghats and there was no other ruler of Malabār at the time who had more extensive possessions."[83] This sovereign was actively connected with the Śucīndram pagoda, and undoubtedly, he was the architect of the Sabha Maṇḍapa of the temple. The inscription which glorifies this benefaction, describes the king as "Kēralakṣmāpatīndra" (the great emperor of Kēraḷa).[84]

Among the successors of Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma, one Āditya Varma, his younger brother Rāma Varma and another member of the family, Mārtāṇḍa Varma — all ruling as co-partners in the latter half of the 15th century — were authors of certain embellishments of the

83. T. K. Velu Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 127.
84. T. A. S., VIII, p. 28.

Śucīndram pagoda, as their own inscriptions tell us. The Vēṇāḍ sovereigns at this time also continued to hold effective sway over the southern regions of Pāṇḍināḍ.

Two other rulers figuring prominently in Śucīndram and Southern Nāñcināḍ in the last quarter of the 15th century were Jayasimha Dēva II, who reigned about 1486 A.D.; and Sakalakalā Mārtāṇḍavarma, his successor, about 1495 A.D. Jayasimha II is famous as having upheld the cause of the oppressed weavers of Idalākkudy. His celebrated Pillar Inscription of Paraśurāma Perunteruvu in Kōṭṭār[85] states that the king came on tour to Vaḍaśēry and patiently heard the representation made to him by the residents of Paraśurāma Perunteruvu, who had immigrated from distant lands and were earning their bread by dyeing clothes. They represented to the sovereign their grievance that they were subjected to various hardships by the people of the higher castes like the Brahmins and the Pillamārs. The benevolent monarch extended his protection to them and issued an ordinance that those who oppressed them or prevented them from the use of public wells and tanks were to be severely punished.

Sakalakalā Mārtāṇḍavarma, whose reign ranged about 670 M.E. (1405 A.D.), established a temple of Vināyakar at the village of Marungūr, three miles north-east of Śucīndram. Like Jayasimhadēva II, he too, interested himself in the settlement of social disputes; for, we learn that he promulgated certain rules regulating the conduct of the "right and left hand castes" towards each other.

Bhūtala Śrī Vīra Udayamārtāṇḍa : The epigraphic source shows that the next Vēṇāḍ sovereign, who played a role of importance in Nāñcināḍ was the famous Bhūtala Śrī Vīra Udayamārtāṇḍa. He was associated with the government of the country as early as 670 M.E. though his formal reign began only from 691 M.E. (1516 A.D). An ambitious and daring warrior, he advanced to Tirunelvēli and conquered the major part of the district; as a token of his triumphs, he assumed the title of Maṇkoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra. The inscriptions of this mighty king found in Brahmadēśam, Śērmādēvi, Ambāsamudram and Kaḷakkāḍ attest his victorious career. Several temples in Nāñcināḍ received his active patronage. On the pagoda of Śucīndram, he settled a gift of lands in Tāḷakuḍi.[86] Very probably he was the architect of the shrine of Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar near the entrance of the

85. T. K. Velu Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, App. M. Doc. XV, p. 13.
86. T. A. R., 89 of 1096. M. E.

Sucīndram pagoda. His patronage was extended to the Jayantīśvara temple at Tāḷakuḍi[87] and Kṛṣnasvāmy temple at Tōvāḷai.[88]

But his munificence was by no means confined to his own religion. He bestowed liberal gifts of lands on the Jain temple at Nagercoil.[89] What is more, an inscription at Kanyākumari records how this king extended his sympathy to the Christian Paravas at Kumarimuṭṭam.[90] When representations were made to him that they were harassed by the Hindus, he issued a royal edict ensuring them protection and exemption from certain oppressive taxes, which they had been compelled to pay to the village community. At once a brilliant soldier and liberal administrator, Udayamārtāṇḍavarma is entitled to a lofty place in the history of Nāñcināḍ.

Nāñcināḍ and Vijayanagar: It was during the reign of Bhūtala Śrī Vīra Udayamārtāṇḍavarma that a serious conflict arose between Vijayanagar and Vēṇāḍ. Regarding the results of this collision, the commonly accepted view is that the Vēṇād ruler was worsted and that he had to acknowledge the supremacy of Vijayanagar. Of late, however, a rather futile controversy has been started by Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai, the author of the revised State Manual. Hence, it is essential that a dispassionate inquiry into all the available data is made, bearing in mind that the sacred Muse of History should not be prostituted to subserve any irrelevant object.[91]

The circumstances which led to the invasion of 1532 A.D. occurred in the reign of Kṛṣṇa Dēva Rāya. The Pāndyan king, who had already become a vassal of Vijayanagar, was incessantly harassed by the aggressive Vēnād ruler. The Pāṇḍya sought the help of the Vijayanagar Emperor. In the meanwhile, the Vēṇāḍ Tiruvadi had given further offence to Kṛṣṇa Dēva Rāya by harbouring the rebel chief of Cōḷa Rājya who had defied the Vijayanagar supremacy. The Emperor, therefore, decided upon immediate revenge. Before the expedition

87 T. A. S., VI, p 131.
88. Idem, IV, pp. 100-101.
89. T. A. S., VI, pp. 157 ff
90. Ibid. pp. 179-180.
91 Prof. K. V Rangaswamy Aiyangar, in his Foreword to Sundaram Pillay's 'Early Sovereigns of Travancore', rightly deplores that revised 'Nationalism' in Travancore now resents any suggestion that any part of Travancore was conquered by a foreign ruler, Pāndya, Cōla or Vijayanagara, while it is ready to advance somewhat fantastic claims for Travancore of conquest of distant foreign areas.

could start, Kṛṣṇa Dēva Rāya expired; but the project was immediately undertaken by Acyuta Rāya, he himself leading the host. The party reached Śrīrangam, whence, Acyuta Rāya despatched his brother-in-law Sālaka Timma to conquer the South and punish the Tiruvaḍi. The Travancore forces encountered the host on the banks of Tāmraparṇi. Concerning the result of the battle, the 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam', as well as the inscriptions of Acyuta, assert that the Tiruvadi was defeated, and that a pillar of victory was planted on the Tāmraparṇi river.[92] It is further stated that the vanquished Vēṇād ruler not only surrendered the fugitive, but made over to Timma presents of elephants and horses. The Vijayanagar general accepted them on behalf of his sovereign, reinstated the Pāṇdya on his ancestral throne, and then, accompanied by the Tiruvaḍi, proceeded on pilgrimage to the famous shrine of Anantaśayanam at Trivandrum. Thence Sālaka Timma, along with the Tiruvadi, went to Rāmēśvaram and eventually to Śrīrangam, where he produced before the Emperor "the Cēra king and other prisoners, and submitted to him a report of his expedition." Acyuta commanded his minister to punish the Tiruvadi for having encroached upon the Pāṇḍyan dominion, and he permitted 'the Pāṇḍya to rule over his ancestral territories'.[93]

On the other hand, Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai discredits the literary and epigraphic data as one-sided. He contends that the 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam' is a laudatory work and consequently unreliable, and adds that the inscriptions which record the victory over Vēṇāḍ are found in Kāñci and other places, located far away from Travancore. It must be conceded at once that the 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam' is an ornate poem; but, to admit that is by no means to conclude that it is undependable regarding all details of contemporary events Moreover, the data furnished by the literary source is corroborated by the epigraphic evidence.

It seems far-fetched to suggest, as is done by Mr. Pillai, that, with a view to white-washing the defeat sustained by Vijayanagar, the 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam' has invented the story of Sālaka Timma's pilgrimage to Trivandrum, accompanied by the Tiruvaḍi. Mr. Velu Pillai makes capital out of the circumstance that the 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam' makes no mention of Padmanābhapuram, which is an important place on the way from the Tāmraparṇi to Trivandrum.[94] Clearly, this piece of negative testimony cannot be exploited for the purpose of dis-

92. 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam', Canto VI, Verses 29-31, and A.R.E., 1900 p. 27.
93 Dr. S. K. Aiyangar: 'The Sources of Vijayanagar', p. 160.
94 T. K. Velu Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 169.

crediting the entire reference to the pilgrimage as a figment of the poet's imagination.[95]

The most important objection to Mr. Pillai's view is provided by epigraphic testimony. His argument, based on the provenance of the inscriptions, is hardly convincing. The Emperor was not present at the battle of Tāmraparṇi, and the General could not have recorded his victory at Tirunelvēli. It is true that, so late as 1541 A.D., a Travancore king instituted a Sandhi in the temple of Paḷḷikkal (in the Tirunelvēli Dt.) and re-named the temple after himself. But that does not by any means disprove the triumph of Vijayanagar.

On the other hand, the positive data furnished by epigraphs cannot be brushed aside. The copper plate of the reign of Muttu Kṛṣṇappa corroborates the defeat of Tiruvaḍi.[96] The plate records a gift of the village of Puliyūrkuṟicci in Tiruvaḍidēśam by the son of Aṇṇan Basavaṇṇa Nāyakar, who was an officer of Rājādhirāja Viṭṭhalarāja. The plate is dated Śaka 1459 and Kollam 713, which correspond to the year 1537 A.D. How could this have occurred if the supremacy of Vijayanagar had not been recognized by the Tiruvaḍi ? Moreover, the inscription at Elavanasūr of Śaka 1453 (1532 A.D) includes, among the birudas of Acyuta, the title of "Tiruvaḍisaptāṅgaharaṇa"[97] viz., he who captured the seven emblems of Tiruvaḍi's royalty. In the face of this overwhelming testimony, the triumph of Vijayanagar in the conflict of 1532 A.D. is by no means open to doubt.

95. No doubt, Rājanātha, the poet employs the word 'Asthirajayāpajayam' in describing the battle. Verse 20 of Canto VI in 'Acyutarāyābhyudayam' runs thus:

अविचारितस्वपरयोधमनाहतजीवमस्थिरजयापजयम् ।
अजनिष्ट जन्यमनयोर्बलयोरपि नारदेन यददृष्टचरम् ॥ २० ॥

It may be translated as follows·
"There arose between them a battle, the like of which was not witnessed previously even by Nārada In the battle, the soldiers of one's own side could not be discriminated from those of the enemy. It was a battle in which life did not count and in which neither victory nor defeat was steadily on one's side."

Clearly, the verse indicates that the poet aims only at emphasizing the tense and hotly contested nature of the battle. In the succeeding lines, he asserts categorically that the Tiruvaḍi, having been defeated in battle, approached the general, and prostrating before him, acknowledged his own defeat. In these circumstances it is unreasonable to imagine that the poet states in the earlier part of the poem that the result of this particular battle was indecisive.

96. M. E. R. 1905-6, No. 6.

97. A R.E 1937-38, p. 105.

The second attack: Udayamārtāṇḍa died towards the end of 710 M.E. (1535 A.D.). It was during the rule of one of his successors, Uṇṇi Kērala Varma, otherwise known as Venṟumaṇkoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra Śrī Vīra Kērala, that the second attack by Vijayanagar occurred. This time the scene of conflict was within the confines of Nāñcinād itself. The immediate causes of the renewed attack are stated to have been the remissness of Tiruvadi in the payment of tribute on the one hand, and his repeated incursions into the Pāṇḍya territory on the other. Another object of the second invasion was to secure the allegiance of the Paravas, who, having been converted to Christianity by the Portuguese, were inclined to be loyal to the latter. This expedition was led by Rāmarāya Viṭṭhala, the Vijayanagara Viceroy at Madurai, and his brother Cinna Timma. The invading host entered by the Āruvāymoḻi Pass and encountered the Vēṇāḍ forces at Kōṭṭāṟ. We have the oft-repeated account regarding Xavier, who is said to have suddenly appeared with crucifix in hand in front of the Vijayanagar army and struck terror into their hearts, as if by a miracle.[98] But, it must be observed that none of the sources speaks of a pitched battle, much less of a victory for the Vēṇāḍ ruler. It is true that Uṇṇi Kērala, ever afterwards held Xavier in high esteem and even wanted his people to obey him, which tend to confirm that Xavier had played a valuable part in the settlement of the conflict. The plausible inference is that Xavier had interceded on behalf of Uṇṇi Kērala and succeeded in effecting a rapprochement.

But Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai feels impelled to assert that the Vijayanagar army was defeated for the second time. He states that "the Vijayanagar army was ignominously defeated at Kōṭṭāṟ in 1544 A.D.," and that "the invaders were driven away by the bravery of the Travancore troops and the resolution of their king."[99] No positive evidence for that statement, however, has been advanced by him. On the other hand, how he is able to maintain his position in the face of the two Śucīndram inscriptions is inexplicable. The first inscription, dated 720 M.E., records that Viṭṭhala built the Gōpura of the temple for Tiruvēnkaḍanātha and erected the Dhvajastambha in front of the Perumāḷ shrine. The second epigraph of 722 M.E. registers a gift of lands settled by Venṟumaṇkoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra Rāma Varma for offerings to Tiru-

98. Fr. Heras marshalls the testimony furnished by several Missionaries and urges the credibility of the accounts. See foot notes on pages 144-47 of Fr. Heras's "Aravīḍu Dynasty of Vijayanagara".

99. T. K Velu Pillai. State Manual, Vol. II, p. 176.

vēnkaḍa Emperumān on the birthdays of Viṭṭhala. Mr. Pillai hastens to explain that the endowment of the Travancore king was instituted as a token of gratitude for Viṭṭhala's construction of the Gōpura. This seems more ingenious than convincing. For one thing, if Viṭṭhala and his army had been defeated and "driven away," as has been claimed, obviously, it is incongruous to hold that he came to Śucīndram and undertook the stupendous work of constructing the Gōpura. Moreover, an endowment of the triumphant monarch in honour of the vanquished foe would reverse the natural order of expectation. The description of Viṭṭhala as 'Pāṇḍyarājyasthāpanācārya' and the absence of a similar reference in relation to the Tiruvaḍi, are employed by Mr. Pillai to urge that the Vēṇāḍ ruler's position was not in any way affected. But, it must be observed that, it was as a champion of the Pāṇḍya against Tiruvadi's aggressions and it was for the reinstatement of the Pāndya in his dominions, that the Vijayanagar expeditions were primarily undertaken. Hence, far from proving Mr. Pillai's thesis, the reference to Vitthala as 'Pāndyasthāpanācārya' has the contrary effect.

Furthermore, the Tirupati Dēvasthānam Inscription (Vol. V, No. 158) records the grant of a village near Tāmraparṇi by the Vēṇāḍ king for the performance of certain ceremonies as invocations for the prosperity of Viṭṭhala. Another inscription[100] states definitely that Viśvanātha obtained from Rāmarājarāyan the Tiruvaḍidēśa as amaranāyakam. It adds that Viśvanātha's son Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka granted seven villages in this Province to the God of the Kṛsnāpuram temple, which was constructed by him. This shows beyond doubt the subordinate position of Tiruvadi in relation to Vijayanagar. The epigraphic testimony is further corroborated by literary sources like the "Rāmarājyam" and the "Yādavābhyudayavyākhya," all of which sing the glory of Viṭṭhala's victory over Tiruvaḍi.[101]

On the whole, it is clear that attempts to question the establishment of Vijayanagar supremacy are bound to encounter serious obstacles.[102] In truth, it appears that the Vēṇāḍ king concluded a peace with Viṭṭhala through the mediation of Xavier, recognizing the supremacy of Vijayanagar. The exact terms of the peace are not known. There is no means of ascertaining the question whether or not the annual payment of

100. M.E.R., 17 of 1912.

101. Dr. S. K Aiyangar: 'Sources of Vijayanagar History', p. 16.

102 See also the translated extract of the letter of John Nieuhoff on his Voyages and Travels into Brazil and East Indies'—in the Appendix p. 324 of R Satyanatha Aiyar's "Nāyaks of Madura".

tribute was imposed as a condition; perhaps, it was imposed, if we are to believe the grounds put forward by the Nāyaks of Madurai for their own invasion of the land.

The last expedition: In 1558 A.D. Viṭṭhala again attacked Travancore. Probably remissness in the payment of tribute was the cause. However, this attempt proved disastrous for Viṭṭhala.[103] There is the account given by Fr. Perez, the Portuguese Missionary who had been sent to Viṭṭhala on behalf of the Travancore king. Fr. Perez presented to the troops a standard with the name of Jesus painted on it. The banner was carried by the Travancore army, and, at the hour of battle, according to instructions, the soldiers invoked the name of Jesus in a chorus. It is said that, on hearing the roaring voices, the bewildered Telugu army retreated pell-mell, and was pursued by the Travancore forces. Evidently, the battle ended in the defeat of Viṭṭhala, and there is nothing to warrant a denial of the courage and confidence which had been instilled into the Travancore army by the priest. Perhaps, Viṭṭhala himself was either killed in the battle or in the turmoil that followed it, however, we do not hear of him any further. It is needless to add that the defeat of Viṭṭhala redeemed the independence of Travancore from allegiance to Vijayanagar.

Nāñcināḍ and the Nāyaks of Madurai: Following the footsteps of the Vijayanagar generals, came the Nāyaks of Madurai. The 17th century witnessed a period of trial and tribulation, of suffering and agony for the inhabitants of Nāñcināḍ. It seemed as though there was a recrudescence of incursions similar to those of the early Pāṇḍyas and Cōḷas. Nāñcināḍ once again became the cockpit of Vēṇāḍ. At the hands of the Nāyaks, the invasions brought greater suffering to the masses, for, pillage and plunder invariably followed the attacks.

After 1542 A.D., the last year of Acyutarāya's rule, the Nāyak chiefs gradually established their independence, owing nothing but a formal allegiance to Vijayanagar. In 1553 Viśvanātha Nāyak, the founder of the dynasty, subjugated the Pāṇḍya and reduced him to the position of an insignificant vassal ruling in and around Tirunelvēli. Naturally, their domination over the Pāṇḍya was a prelude to the intrusion into Nāñcināḍ. But Mr. Satyanatha Aiyar's statement, that Travancore remained loyal to the Nāyaks since Viṭṭhala's time, seems inaccurate.[104] It is only from the beginning of the 17th century that the Nāyak contact with

103. Fr. Heras · 'Aravīdu Dynasty of Vijayanagara'., Vol. I, p. 162.
104. 'History of the Nāyaks of Madura', p. 120.

Nāñcināḍ commenced. Doubtless, Kanyākumari was captured by the Nāyaks in or before 1609 A.D., as is clear from Fr. A. Laerzio's letter of November 20th 1609, which describes the Paravas of Kumari as tributaries of the Madurai Nāyak.[105] But Kanyākumari then lay in Puṟattāyanāḍu, beyond the confines of Nāñcināḍ.

Tirumala Nāyak's invasion · The regular invasion of Nāñcināḍ was first undertaken by Tirumala Nāyak in 1634 A.D The exact cause of this invasion is not known; in all probability, it was an act of wanton aggression. That the Nāyaks, as the heirs of the Vijayanagar Empire, were authorized to collect tribute from Travancore was probably employed as a pretext.

Besides semi-historical works of the period, the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts,' recovered recently from the heir of the Periyavīṭṭu Mudaliyār of Aḻakiyapāṇḍipuram, throw a flood of light on the Nāyak invasions and the consequent suffering of the people. The author of the revised State Manual is not inclined to attach much value to these documents, which, he rather insinuatingly says, were discovered only in a private house. There does not seem to be any ground for discrediting the value of the Manuscripts. It is an indisputable fact that the Periyavīṭṭu Mudaliyār and his heirs occupied a pre-eminent position in Nāñcināḍ as accredited leaders of the twelve piḍāgais.[106] The Vēṇāḍ rulers, and even the later Travancore sovereigns, recognized the political status of the Mudaliyār, as is evident from the numerous royal nīṭṭus or communications sent to him. Moreover, the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' pertaining to the Nāyak invasions are corroborated by lithic inscriptions.

Among the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' there is found the copy of an edict issued by the then king of Vēṇāḍ remitting taxes on the lands which had to be left uncultivated on account of the Nāyak depredation. This document enables us to determine the date of Tirumalā's invasion. The edict is dated 22nd Kumbham 810 M.E.; and since it speaks of the failure to cultivate the Kār (Kanni) crop of 810 M.E., Tirumala Nāyak's invasion must have taken place prior to Makaram 810 M.E. (January 1635 A.D.). That the havoc caused was appalling, is clearly proved by this edict itself and by several other references in the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts.'

Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai is at great pains to show that the Travancore king was not defeated by Tirumala Nāyak; but, it is doubtful whether

105. See Fr. Heras: 'Aravīḍu Dynasty of Vijayanagara', p. 354.
106 See 'Kērala Society Papers', II, Series 7.

he proves his contention. However, Mr. Satyanatha Aiyar's statement, that Tirumala's gift of land to the Āladiyūr Śiva temple dated 811 M.E. must have been made in commemoration of his victory,[107] seems unwarranted. An endowment to a temple, and that, to one situated outside the place of belligerent operations, may signify a defeat as much as a victory, or neither. Quite different in character is the piece of evidence furnished by Rāmappayyan Ammānai, a ballad, which, though revelling in romantic imagery, is not devoid of historical value. It records not merely a conquest of the 'Malayāḷam country' by the ruler of Madurai, but it specifically states that the 'Nāñcināḍ Rāja,' the foremost among the Nāyak vassals, was appointed to guard the forts of the Pāṇḍya capital. Further, it adds that the king of Nāñcināḍ co-operated with Tirumala Nāyak in his war against the Sētupati. Exaggeration or adulation may take the shape of an over-estimation of the tributes or the grandeur of the victory, but not of the fabrication that the Rāja fought as a vassal of Tirumala Nāyak against the Sētupati. Nor can Mr. Pillai by any means cast a doubt, as he has done, on the identity of the 'Nāñcināḍ Rāja,' who was none other than the ruler of Vēṇāḍ. It has been, and is even to-day, usual, with the people to the east of Ārāmboḷi to describe the region immediately to their west, either as Nāñcināḍ or as Malayālam Among the people of Madurai and Tirunelvēli Districts, the Travancore king is invariably spoken of as the 'Malayāḷattu Rāja'.

Besides, the 'Iravikkuṭṭippiḷḷaippāṭṭu,' a ballad of South Travancore, adverted to by Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai in support of his contention, does not declare that it was a victory for the Vēṇāḍ ruler. The ballad describes how, in the battle of Kaṇiyākulam, Iravikkuṭṭi Pillai, the famous commander, was killed valiantly fighting. Apparently, as has happened in several well-known battles, the death of the General spelt the doom of the fighting force. Moreover, the ballad itself is not an unimpeachable source of history, and when, on top of all, Mr. Velu Pillai states that 'the ballad, taken along with a prevalent tradition, proves Travancore's victory,' the weakness of his conclusion is obvious.

Fr. Peter Martin, in his letter[108] says: "Otherwise, it will be impossible for the king of Travancore to make head against so great a number of enemies, whom, he *never overcame but once* and that by their imprudence." The latter triumph, which occurred in 1697 A.D., is definitely known to have been the result of the stratagem of Ravivarman.

107. 'History of the Nāyaks of Madura', p. 120.
108 Quoted in p. 297 of 'History of the Nāyaks'

This categorical statement of Fr. Martin could not have appeared, if Tirumala Nāyak had been defeated earlier.

When all is said, the real question at issue is not who secured the formal victory. Absolutely undeniable is the fact that several places in Nāñcinād were ravaged and pillaged. Mr. Pillai himself states that " although the Madura forces repeated their incursions into Nāñcināḍ and committed depredations, they were not able to win any victory over Travancore ".[109] Since it is admitted that the recurrence of the harrowing cruelty and devastating plunder by the invading hosts could not be prevented, the inference is clear.

Tirumala's advent to Śucīndram, however, brought on its wake several glorious benefactions. Though no contemporary records of his activities in Śucīndram are now available, tradition, current in the locality, is positive that the palace in the South Street, the Garuḍāḷvār shrine, the endowment of a golden angi or mask for the image of Tekkēḍam Perumāḷ and the construction of broad streets in Śucīndram are all products of his munificence. Palm-leaf records, referring to these benefactions, are said to have existed earlier in the temple, and subsequently, in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha ; but they are not now traceable. A petition, submitted recently by the Tekkumaṉ Maṭham Pōṟṟi to the Government, makes an incidental reference to Tirumala's benefactions. Further, the portrait statue in the Garuḍāḷvār shrine is now known to be that of Tirumala Nāyak, and this constitutes an additional proof of his association with the pagoda.

Following Tirumala's invasion there occurred incessant Nāyak incursions into Nāñcināḍ. Inscriptions as well as the ' Mudaliyār Manuscripts' furnish a vivid picture of these harrowing details. The Vaḍaśēry inscription of 873 M.E. testifies to the raids having been frequent during the period extending from 852 to 871 M.E. (1677 to 1696 A.D.)[110] Enormous was the loss suffered by the helpless people of Nāñcināḍ. Property was lost, damage to cultivation was immense, honour was in jeopardy and life was insecure.

It must, however, be noted that Ravivarman, the ruler of Vēṇāḍ between 1684 and 1718 A.D., did undertake sincere efforts to relieve the sufferings of the people. The Vaḍaśēry inscription, noticed above, registers the remission of taxes from 852 to 871 M.E. i.e., 1677 to 1696 A.D. A palm-leaf record of 898 M.E. (1723 A.D.) reveals how some

109. T. K. Velu Pillai : State Manual, Vol. II, p. 192.
110. T. A. S., V, pp. 210-12.

years earlier, the king, camping in Bhūtappāṇḍi, issued a decree granting relief to the cultivators of the lands belonging to the village temple.[111] It is interesting to learn that the King Uṇṇikēraḷavarma, who succeeded Ravivarman in 1718 A.D., claims to have expelled the plundering hordes and beseeched the people of Nāñcināḍ to return to their homes and resume cultivation. Evidently, many had deserted their lands and fled to places of refuge.

Invasion of Mangammāḷ: Another formidable invasion, probably, one similar to that of Tirumala Nāyak occurred about 1697 A.D., during the reign of Mangammāl, the Queen Regent at Madurai. The circumstances which led to this invasion are narrated in Taylor's collection of Manuscripts,[112] and in Nelson's 'Madura Manual'.[113] They are, in substance, confirmed by the accounts of Jesuits like Bertrand and Fr. Peter Martin.[114] What happened was that, Ravivarman had entered into a secret treaty with the Baḍagas in order to obtain their help against the turbulent feudal barons, the Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Piḷḷamār. Accordingly, the latter were either killed or expelled by the ruthless Baḍaga accomplices. But, suddenly Ravivarman mustered his army, attacked the unprepared Baḍagas and hacked their host to pieces. It was as a measure of retaliation, that Mangammāḷ despatched a punitive force under Daḷavāy Narasappayya Taylor states that, after a strenuous struggle, the Daḷavāy emerged triumphant and dictated terms of peace.

Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai denies the very fact of invasion by Narasappayya. His main argument is as follows. Taylor has mentioned that, among the trophies which Narasappayya had carried after the war, there were some pieces of ordnance and that they were preserved in the forts of Madurai and Tiruccirāppaḷḷi. But Nelson says that he could not find these guns there even after a thorough search. Mr. Pillai makes capital out of this negative circumstance. But it must be urged that Nelson visited these places about 1868 A.D., more than 150 years after Narasappayya's expedition; and, we have no authentic or detailed record as to all that had happened in these forts during this long period.

On the other hand, we have the positive evidence furnished by the inscription engraved on a stone near a well in Vaḍaśēri; it presents the name of Mangammāḷ. Significant is the fact that the well itself is locally

111. Ibid pp. 221-24.
112. O H. M.S S, II, p. 215
113. Part III, pp. 226 ff.
114. Vide Appendices in R. Satyanatha Aiyar's 'History of the Nāyaks of Madura.'

known as the 'Mangammāḷ-dharma-kkınaṟu.'[115] Obviously, the fact that the record is 'hopelessly mis-spelt and that the engraving has been executed clumsıly' cannot be bolstered up, as ıs done by Mr. Pillai, to deny the importance of the document. Thus, the alleged reasons for dısbelıeving Narasappayya's invasion do not appear to be convincing.

Vindication of popular rights. The acute distress suffered by Nāñcınāḍ from about the mıddle of the 17th to the middle of the 18th century as a consequence of the repeated ınvasions and raids of the Nāyaks, is clearly learnt from the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts'. These records furnish abundant details regardıng (a) the actual invasions of the Nāyaks on several occasions, (b) the havoc caused by their plunder and the damage done to crops and property, (c) the overbearing behaviour and the cruel tyranny of the government officials, who tried to fish in troubled waters, (d) the attempts made by the ruler to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Nāncināḍ and (e) the numerous resolutions *(opporavu moḻi māṟā ōlaikal)* passed by the Nāṭṭār, (the people) of Nāñcināḍ, in order to resist the rapacity of officials and to organize measures of relief. Undoubtedly, these resolutions constitute the most interesting part of the records. They reveal the acute political consciousness and the corporate spirit which had developed among the people. The opinion of the majority was declared binding upon every individual. "In thus asserting our rıghts, if any piḍāgai or village or any single individual is subjected to loss by acts of government, we should support them by reinbursing such loss from the common funds. If, at any time any one should get into the secret of government and impair the privileges or rights of the country, he should be subȷected to a public enquiry by the Nāṭṭārs".[116] The people resolved even to migrate to the east of Āruvāymoḻi if the authorities continued theır policy of callous indifference. The threats of non-cooperation and of emigration were not common weapons in other parts of India then; they seem to savour of quite modern ideas. Nor did these resolutıons remain verbal declarations only. They were carried out at times, and the government was consequently compelled to redress their grievances.

The insecurity and unrest which prevailed in the 17th and 18th centuries affected Śucīndram and the neighbouring villages. Some raids were directed particularly towards Īttaṅkāḍ, Śucīndram and

115. T. A. S., V. p. 210.
116. Translation of the resolution passed at Āśrāmam in 889 M.E. Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol. I, p. 320.

Āśrāmam. For instance, the resolutions passed at Īśāntimangalam on 15th Vaikāśi 894 M.E. (1719 A.D.) reveal how Śucīndram and Āśrāmam were attacked and their houses set on fire. Besides, the royal nīṭṭu of the 25th Āni 898 M.E. (1723 A.D.) states that one Appayyan, starting from Tiruccirāppaḷḷi with cavalry and infantry forces, came and camped at Īttaṅkād, about two miles south-east of Śucīndram, and devastated the neighbouring places. Another royal nīṭṭu of the year 899 M.E (1724 A.D.) records a similar raid of the Nāyaks on Vaḻukkampāṟai to the east of Śucīndram, and adds that, in the course of their depredations, they violated the sanctity of several temples in the region. Yet another royal communication, which belongs to about 1725 A.D , states that one Aḻagappa Mudaly came at the head of Nāyak troops and cavalry and lay encamped at Vaḻukkampāṟai. One of the "Mudaliyār Manuscripts" furnishes evidence of the fact that the date of Aḻagappa Mudaly's attack of Nāñcinād ranged sometime between 22nd Tai and 25th Vaikāśi of 900 M.E. (1725 A.D.). Popular tradition associates with Aḻagappa Mudaly a terrible plunder of Śucīndram. Besides, it is believed that a huge vessel of bronze belonging to the pagoda was taken away by this marauder.

The Modern Period : The modern era in the history of Nāñcināḍ and of the entire Travancore State may be said to have dawned with the epoch-making reign of Bālamārtāṇḍavarma (1729-1758 A.D.), the great conqueror and organizer. Before his time, the power of the Vēṇāḍ king was ineffective; rebellions were frequent; the insubordination of the overweening Yōgakkār (the temple trustees) and of the Eṭṭuvīttil Piḷḷamār (the semi-feudal chieftains) continued unchecked, and on top of all, the incessant incursions from the East crippled the royal authority. Gifted with the instincts and ability of a born conqueror, Mārtāndavarma first set about expanding his dominion by subduing the neighbouring rulers and crushing the rebel leaders. A brilliant success crowned his efforts, and he carved out modern Travancore. A far-sighted statesman and an able organizer, Mārtāṇḍavarma consolidated the conquered territory and remodelled the administrative machinery. His reforming zeal found enormous scope in Śucīndram itself, where he initiated the bold policy of curbing the overgrown power of the Yōgakkār.

Candā Sāhib's Invasion . While Mārtāṇḍavarma was engrossed in his early military exploits in Central Travancore, there occurred in the extreme south an invasion by Candā Sāhib. Nelson, the author of the Madura Manual, states (p. 256) that, in 1740 A.D. the Nawab of Ārcot placed Safdar Āli Khān and

Candā Sāhib at the head of a large army and entrusted them with a sort of roving commission to attack and plunder the southern kingdoms at the extremity of the Peninsula. Candā Sāhib was the son-in-law and confidential minister of the Nawab of Ārcot, and hence he was selected as one of the leaders of the party. Boda Sāhib, another relative of the Nawab of Ārcot, also accompanied the invaders.

Nelson writes that, after the capture of Tanjāvūr, the Muslim invaders marched on Travancore, and he cryptically adds that they made themselves masters of the land with the greatest ease. This, however, does not tell the whole story. Caldwell[117] offers a different version, which tallies with the account of Shankunny Menon based on the Padmanābhasvāmy Temple Records. Both of these writers show how, Mārtāṇḍavarma was at that particular moment passing through a critical phase of his life and was obliged to fight several enemies. Particularly the menace from the Rāja of Kāyaṅkulam on the one hand, and that from the Dutch on the other, became serious; and discretion impelled him to concentrate his attention first on these dangerous foes. Hence he effected an understanding with Candā Sāhib, probably, by paying him a large sum of money. In the matter of adopting this plan, the king was aided by the shrewd and able minister, Rāmayyan Dalavā. But, before the understanding was effected, enormous havoc had been caused to Nāñcināḍ by the invaders.

Through the time-honoured Pass of Āruvāymoḻi the rapacious host rushed in. Marching through Koṭṭāram and ravaging the places on the way, the invaders reached Īttaṅkāḍ about two miles south-east of Śucīndram. The royal forces, stationed at Kalkuḷam, the seat of the Vēṇāḍ ruler, could not be diverted to intercept the invaders, since their service was more urgently needed in the north. The trustees of the temple at Śucīndram, the Yōgakkār, becoming alarmed at the report about the penetration of the fierce horde, improvised an army manned by the tenants and servants of the pagoda, and despatched it to Īttaṅkāḍ. The object was to intercept the advancing troops and delay their attack on the temple of Śucīndram, which, the authorities rightly apprehended, would follow. A member of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha led the motely group. A fierce struggle ensued at Īttaṅāḍ and naturally, the ill-organized band of men from Śucīndram was easily dispersed. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi leader was among those killed in the combat.[118]

117. 'History of Tinnevelly'., p. 138.

118. A gift of land was bestowed later on the Vattappalli family by the king of Travancore in recognition of the valiant fight put up by the member at Īttaṅkāḍ.

Flushed with triumph, the invading horde marched straight on Śucīndram. In the meanwhile, the authorities of the temple had taken every possible precaution in order to protect the inner shrine and the sacred images from sacrilege. Granite walls were speedily erected in front of both Tekkēḍam and Vadakkēḍam shrines enclosing their Garbhagṛhas. Inside these cellars the Utsava images and valuable jewels were preserved. Fortunately, Candā Sāhib and party were taken in by the camouflage. After setting on fire the huge temple Car, stationed in front of the pagoda, the plunderers rushed inside. Candā Sāhib and his men entered the temple and gave vent to their iconoclastic fury The head of the image of Caṇḍēśvara was broken. All the figures of lamp-bearers in the inner prākāra were damaged.

From Śucīndram, the party proceeded to Kōṭṭāṛ, Vaḍaśēri, Tirup-patisāram and Vīmanaśēri, and, looting followed in all these places. The remissions granted to the people of these villages, as learnt from the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' dated 15th Cittirai 915 M.E., confirm the popular reports about the havoc wrought in these villages. It was early in the month of Cittirai that Mārtāṇḍavarma sent his men to negotiate a rapproachment with Candā Sāhib through payment of money, and only then, the party withdrew.

Dedication of Travancore to Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy : Mārtāṇḍa-varma's reign marks a new epoch, also in the history of the temples of Travancore. He undertook the momentous step of dedicating the entire kingdom of Travancore to Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy, the deity of hoary Anantaśayanam. The ceremony of dedication took place on the morning of the 5th Tai 925 M.E. (January 1750 A.D.). Thenceforward, the king and his successors became the servants of Pādmanābhasvāmy and ruled the kingdom on behalf of this tutelary deity. This stroke of policy ennobled the position of the Travancore monarch in the eyes of his subjects. At the same time, it imposed a great responsibility on the sovereign as the protector of the Hindu Religion and Hindu Dharma in the State. The history of every important temple in the State has been profoundly influenced by this step taken by Mārtāṇḍa-varma. It is gratifying to find that, almost every one of his successors has nobly upheld the lofty traditions of piety and devotion.

Mārtāṇḍavarma's glorious reign came to an end in 1758 A.D. His successors on the throne have introduced other important reforms in the administration of the land. Next to the Padmanābhasvāmy temple, the Śucīndram pagoda has received the greatest attention at the hands of the rulers of Travancore. Soon after his accession to the throne, every

sovereign avails himself of the earliest opportunity to pay his homage to Sthāṇumālaya of Śucīndram. Many are the benefactions bestowed and embellishments undertaken by them. So great is the hold of the temple on the sovereigns of the land that, in the order of appointment issued to every Dewan, the Prime Minister, one of the responsibilities specified is the patronage of the temples in the State, that of Śucīndram being particularly singled out by name.

Successors of Mārtāṇḍavarma: At the hands of the able successors of Mārtāṇḍavarma, Travancore continued to make a steady progress.[119] One important piece of reform, felt imperative in order to secure effective centralization of royal authority, was the reduction of the overgrown might of the Yōgakkār, who had established supreme control over the principal temples of the State. They exercised an ever-increasing influence on the people and established practically an 'imperium in imperio' within the State. Though several rulers and their ministers had desired to reduce their power, the most epoch-making step was taken only early in the 19th century A.D.

During the reign of Gauri Lakṣmi Bāi (1811-15 A.D.), Colonel Munro, the Dewan-Resident, in the midst of numerous administrative reforms, ordered in 1812 A.D. the assumption by the Government of the control over the leading temples of the State. The Śucīndram temple, along with 347 others, and their entire property were brought under the management of the Government.

Another event of supreme importance in the history of Nāñcināḍ occurred during the ministership of Col. Munro. This was the promulgation of a royal proclamation in 1818 A.D., prohibiting all political meetings in Nāñcināḍ. For some time past, the enormous influence wielded by the 'Nāṭṭukkūṭṭams' or the popular assemblies had been felt irksome by the ruling power. The predecessor of Col. Munro in office, Ummiṇi Tampy, had deprived the Nāñcināḍians of their bell-metal trumpet, which had been conferred on them earlier by the ruler as a mark of distinction. Ummiṇi Tampy had also destroyed the drum, the horn and the rod of office of the Periyavīṭṭu Mudaliyār, the accredited

119. The succession list of the rulers of Travancore after Mārtāndavarma is as follows: Rāma Varma Kārtikai Tirunāl 1758-1798 A.D.; Bāla Rāma Varma 1798-1810; Rāni Gauri Laksmi Bāi 1811-1815, Rāni Gauri Pārvati Bāi 1815-1829; Rāma Varma Svāti Tirunāḷ 1829-1847; Mārtāṇḍa Varma Uttram Tirunāl 1847-1860; Rāma Varma Āyillyam Tirunāl 1860-1880, Rāma Varma Viśākham Tirunāḷ 1880-1885; Śrī Mūlam Tirunāḷ 1885-1924; Regent Sētu Lakṣmi Bāi 1924-1932; Rāma Varma Śrī Citra Tirunāl 1932.

leader of Nāñcināḍ. Besides, he had tried to curb the peoples' right of holding political assemblies. It was left to Col Munro to deal the death-blow, as a result of which, the virile popular assemblies of Nāñcināḍ perished.

The sovereigns of recent times like Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl, the Regent Mahārāṇi Sētu Laksmi Bāi and the present ruler Śrī Citra Tirunāḷ, have greatly contributed to the improvement and prosperity of the State, by their whole-hearted devotion to duty. The illustrious reign of Śrī Mūlam Tirunāḷ (1885-1924 A.D.) witnessed an all-round progress. The Departments of Finance, Land Revenue, Judiciary, Education, Irrigation and Public Works were all reorganized and improved. By far the greatest service to South Travancore was the construction of the Kōdayāṟ Dam and a network of irrigation channels. Completed after seven years of patient labour at a cost of about thirty three lakhs of Rupees, the Kōdayār Project ensures a regular supply of water for well over 50,000 acres of land. An ardently pious ruler, Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl, evinced a keen interest in the temples of the State and maintained a vigilant watch on the observance of the traditional rites and ceremonies. It was during his reign that a separate Department of 'Dēvasvams' (temples) was established in 1922 A.D.

The rule of Sētu Laksmi Bāi, the Regent (1924-32) witnessed the continued prosperity of the State. Among the reforms which appeared during her reign, the abolition of the 'Dēvadāsi' system in temples and the prohibition of animal sacrifices were the most far-reaching ones.

The present ruler, Śrī Citra Tirunāḷ, has earned the affection of his subjects by a sincere devotion to their welfare. Assisted by able advisers, he has introduced momentous reforms. The abolition of capital punishment, the creation of a Travancore University and the establishment of new industries are a few of his principal innovations. But, by far the most epoch-making achievement was the promulgation of the Temple Entry Proclamation in November 1936, which threw open temples to all Hindus, including the so-called 'Untouchable Classes'. The construction of a concreted Main Trunk Road from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin was completed in 1938, and it has proved to be of immense service in facilitating tourists and pilgrims to reach Śucīndram and Cape Comorin.[120]

120. India became independent on 15th August 1947. After a brief period of hesitation, Travancore joined the Indian Union and following that, on 1st September 1949, Cochin and Travancore were integrated into a United State with the Mahārāja of Travancore as the Rājapramukh

C H A P T E R I I I

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE

The *Temple — the pivot of the village*: To think of Śucīndram is to think of her illustrious temple. The temple has dominated, and continues to dominate, the life of the village. In fact, Śucīndram is a typical example of the village which owes all its fame and glory to its sacred shrine. The Sthānumālayapperumāl temple,[1] so called by virtue of its association with all the Trimūrtis — Brahmā, Visṇu and Śiva—stands majestically facing east, about a hundred yards away from the southern bank of the Pāḻayāṟ. Abutting the southern bank of the river, runs the 'Cape Road.' Two thoroughfares lead from this Main Road to the temple;[2] one runs southward from near the High School and proceeds by the side of the Teppakkuḷam to the pagoda, while the other, branching a few yards off, comes westward through the Sannadhi Street right to the main entrance of the temple.

1. The name Sthānumālaya denotes the combination of the Trimūrtis. Sthānu is a synonym for Śiva, Māl for Visnu and Aya for Brahmā The earliest occurrence of this name in the inscriptions is found only in that of 1471 A.D. (T.A S., IV, p. 94) In earlier lithic records, various names have been used such as "Śivindiramudaiya Emperumān", 'Mahādēva', 'Paramasvāmin,' 'Paramēśvara' and 'Uḍaiyār Śivindiramuḍaiya Nainār'. The greater prominence given to Śiva in the main temple explains the more popular names, Sthāṇunāthasvāmy and Sthānumūrti, used in modern times.

2. See Plan No 1 'Śucīndram'.

The Gōpura : It is the stately tower that arrests our attention first. In fact, the imposing Gōpura is seen from a considerable distance. Even to-day pious Hindus passing within a radius of about five miles from the pagoda may be seen clasping their hands in fervent prayer at the sight of the Gōpura. The height of the Śucīndram Gōpura from the ground level to the top of the Kalaśams is 134 feet 6 inches. It stands over a plinth area of nearly 5,400 square feet (about 90 feet in length and 60 feet in width). The marvellous feature about the Gōpura is its grace. Admirably well-proportioned, the tower presents a gradual tapering upwards. The Śucīndram Gōpura forms a striking contrast with the one at the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple in Trivandrum, where the width at the base is excessive in relation to its height. Indeed, none of the temples in entire Travancore can boast of a Gōpura so elegant and graceful as the one at Śucīndram.

On all the sides of the granite basement, numerous panels present skilfully sculptured representations of the various deities of the Hindu pantheon. The upper storeys are all built of brick and mortar. The outer face of the Gōpura above the plinth surface is indented by numberless bays and balconies, which are profusely studded with plaster figures depicting, in relief, scenes from the Purānas and the Epics. The jambs of the doorways of the upper storeys are flanked on either side by a figure of dvārapālaka, the protecting deity. Stretching above and by the sides of the doorways are successive layers of panels presenting scenes of sacred lore. Barely sixty years have passed since the renovation of the tower was completed; hence, its façade still preserves a charming lustre.

On the pediment in front of the main entrance to the temple are found certain elegantly moulded figures of stucco, well poised. In the middle of the group are Śiva and Umā seated on the bull; to their left is Pārvati on a beautiful swan, while to their right is Viṣṇu mounted on devout Garuḍa. The exquisite grace of these figures is indisputable. Nevertheless, one wonders whether, right at the front entrance of the Trimūrti Kṣētra, it would not be more appropriate to find representations of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Apparently, the traditional injunction against the deification of Brahmā accounts for the substitution of Pārvati in his place.

Tēraḍi Bhūtattān (G. P. No. 39), Tēraḍi Māḍan (G. P. No. 38) and Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar (G. P. No. 37) : Just to the south of the entrance there is a small unpretentious enclosure enshrining Tēraḍi

Bhūtattān. The Svāmi Tēr, the biggest of the temple Cars, stands in front of Tēradi Bhūtattān. On the other side, to the north of the entrance, a little receding into the interior, are found two shrines, erected on a terrace 3 feet above the ground level. Among these two, the northern shrine presents Tēradi Mādan and the southern one Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar. The deities at the entrance are presumed to play the role of the guardians of the pagoda. Here, the coexistence of the primitive Village Gods with Gaṇapati, a later member of the Pantheon, is at once interesting and suggestive.

Nāṭakaśāla: As we approach the main porch, the Nāṭakaśāla, on either side of its entrance we see two lifelike statues of polished gneiss, erected on raised stone pedestals. The two figures stand face to face of each other with hands clasped in anjali. The figure on the southern side represents Nīlakanṭhar Puruṣōttamar, the Pōṟṟi of the Tekkuman Maṭha,[3] as is learnt from the inscription on the pillar supporting the statue. His counterpart on the northern side appears to be a Śaiva devotee, with the characteristic rudrākṣa-māla or garland of beads encircling his clean-shaven head. Local tradition avers that this figure represents the Svāmiyār or the spiritual head of the Tiruvāḍuturai or Nāyakkar Maṭha at Śucīndram. Both these personages are believed to have played a leading part in the collection of funds for the construction of the Śrībalipuras. It is held that, as a mark of gratitude, the people of the place had these two statues erected, one on either side of the entrance.

The Nāṭakaśāla is a magnificent pavilion.[4] Stretching 124 feet long, 32 feet wide and rising to a height of 24 feet from the ground level, this commodious entrance hall eminently befits the grandeur of the pagoda. While in the past, dancing and dramatic performances were staged there by Dēvadāsis, at present, musical entertainments and religious lectures are held during the annual Utsavas.

The two rows of pillars on either wing, supporting the pavilion, are at once imposing and charming. Massive in structure, they also present an exuberance of decorative details. Each one of the pillars is sur-

3. See Infra—chapter XII.

4. Nāṭakaśāla denotes really the hall where dancing is performed and dramas are staged. That, Nātaka signified 'dancing' from times of old, is seen from the reference to Śiva in Tiruvācakam as 'Paramanāṭaka'. 'Kūttādumdēvar', the lord of dance, is another appellation of Śiva. The staging of drama also is an etymological source of the name, which may be inferred from the fact that, on Śivarātri a drama is staged there. In the past, the hall was used both for dancing and for staging the drama.

mounted by an ornamental turret with the representation of a crouching lion at the very top. On the faces of the columns appear linear carvings of a splendid order. Attached to the base of each of the eight pillars is found sculptured the standing figure of a woman. Popular tradition asserts that they represent those Dēvadāsis, who were the donors of the Nāṭakaśāla.[5]

On either wing of the Nāṭakaśāla are found raised terraces, which are now enclosed in order to house the Manager's Office, the Temple Guard's Room and the 'Strong Room' on the south and the Main Store on the north. The successor of the early Śrīkāryakkāran, now called the Manager, who is a subordinate of the Dēvasvam Department, has his office on the easternmost enclosure of the southern terrace. The Manager and his staff of clerks may be seen engaged in their work, seated in the midst of musty files and crowded shelves. Immediately to the west of the Office, there is the small room allotted to two members of the State Police Force, whose duty is to keep watch on the temple and particularly on the adjoining 'jewel room'. This so-called 'Strong Room', well fenced by a closely inter-twined wire netting over the iron bars fixed at short intervals, serves as the treasure-house for preserving the valuable jewels and ornaments owned by the temple. The Main Store on the eastern extremity of the southern wing of the Nāṭakaśāla serves as the granary where large quantities of rice, condiments, oil and sundry other requirements needed for daily use are preserved. The terrace to the west of the Main Store had formerly housed the Temple Guard's Room; it is now an un-enclosed space, where, visitors to the temple may often be seen taking rest.

The ceiling of the Nāṭakaśāla presents a wide variety of floral designs skilfully carved on stone. At the western end of the ceiling, near the doorway, there appear three sculptured figures of women seated in padmāsana, representing the three Dēvīs, Sarasvati, Lakṣmi and Pārvati. They are depicted in a meditative and praying pose. The Sthalapurāṇa states that the three Goddesses came down to Śucīndram in search of their Lords, who had been transformed into babies by the overpowering might of Anasūya's chastity.[6] Evidently, the sculptures portray the Dēvīs performing penance for the recovery of their Lords.

The Gōpuravātal: At the western extremity of the Nāṭakaśāla porch stands the prodigious doorway, 24 feet in height. The panels of

5. See Infra Chapter V.
6. See Infra Chapter IV.

the two-leaved wooden door are intricately carved Each panel contains representations of wide-opened petals of the lotus flower with its protruding bud in the centre. Though skilfully carved, it seems to border on grotesqueness, because the panels are found huddled too close to each other. The doorway leads to a broad vestibule, which runs beneath the tower, and, consequently it is known as Gōpuravātal.[7] It is bounded on the north and south by massive stone walls. On these columns, the figures of some ferocious and awe-inspiring demons are sculptured. They are depicted with protruding bellies, terrific eyes and wide-opened jaws exhibiting monstrous teeth.

Quite an interesting piece of sculpture appears on the northern wall. A pious brahmin carrying in his hand flowers, a vessel of water and other equipments for the performance of pūjā, is portrayed walking towards the temple. Opposite to him, at a slight distance, is shown a tiny Śivalinga under a tree. Apparently, this scene depicts Indra proceeding to offer worship at the shrine for the expiation of his sins, and thus, it forms the representation of a theme of the Sthalapurāṇa.

Gōpuravātal Shrines (G. P. 25A, 25B, 26A and 26B) : On either wing of the Gōpuravātal there exists an elevated terrace of stone. The staircase leading up to the inner recesses of the Gōpura is found on the southern terrace. In a niche on the wall near the staircase appears the image of Nandikēśvara (G. P. No. 26A), while another immediately to the east of it presents Śāsta (G. P. No. 26B). Corresponding to the latter, a niche on the northern wall enshrines the image of Naṭarāja, otherwise called Cidambarēśvaramūrti (G. P. No. 25A), while, by its side on the east there appears the niche presenting the figure of Kāḷi (G. P. No. 25B). In all the four shrines mentioned above, the figures have been chiselled on the face of the walls, and they form marvellous pieces of art. Beyond doubt, the most admirable of them all is the splendid figure of the dancing Naṭarāja, radiating with vigour and grace. In passing, it may be mentioned that all the Gōpuravātal shrines are enshrouded in utter darkness; even during broad daylight the images are not visible without artificial aid.

Proceeding westward from the Gōpuravātal, we come to a portico connecting the doorway with the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, which stands to its west. This portico, 32 feet long and 22 feet broad, is supported by four massive

7 Gōpuravātal is the term employed in the Malayāḷam records of the temple The local people call it 'Gōpuravāśal'. The names adopted here are those found in the current records.

pillars, two in the east and two in the west. Prodigious in size, the pillars are also skilfully shaped. The linear carvings on the pillars are executed splendidly. One feature, however, could have been improved. The corbels of the pillars, though presenting the fully developed puṣpa-bōdigai, appear to be of small length, far out of proportion to the gigantic size of the pillars.

Ūñcal Maṇḍapa: The Ūñcal Maṇḍapa is a rectangular pavilion of stone, 30 feet 6 inches long and 28 feet 4 inches broad. This structure stands on a terrace 2½ feet raised from the ground level, and the ceiling is 24 feet high above the terrace. The stone pediment in front of the Maṇḍapa presents a group of recent paintings, admirably executed. In the middle there appears the familiar painting of Śiva with Umā seated on the bull; to the right of it is Gaṇapati on his Mūṣika Vāhana, while to the left is Subrahmaṇia on the Mayūra or peacock. Though all the three paintings are graceful, that of Subrahmaṇia is particularly so. The splendour of the outspread wing of the peacock and the beaming lustre on the face of Subrahmaṇia contribute to make this piece of painting specially charming.

The four pillars at the different corners of the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa present exquisitely sculptured figures. On the southern and northern pillars of the front side are seen the fascinating sculptures of Manmatha and Rati respectively. Rati's nose is slightly mutilated; nevertheless, both the sculptures continue to preserve, on the whole, their elegance and elaborate ornamentation. Corresponding to these, on the rear side of the Maṇḍapa, the southern and northern pillars present the sculptured figures of Arjuna and Karṇa. Here too, the staff on which Arjuna is shown leaning has been damaged. In order to prevent further havoc, the Maṇḍapa has been recently enclosed by iron railings, which, however, .tend to detract the natural charm of the sculptures inside the Maṇḍapa.

In the centre of the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa stands a raised platform, 12 feet long and 8½ feet wide. The Maṇḍapa is utilized in connexion with the celebration of the Tirukkalyāna festival — marriage of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy with Aramvaḷattamman. On the termination of the marriage ceremony, the images of Śiva and Pārvati (Umayammai) are taken in procession to the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa. A swinging contrivance (Ūñcal) is suspended from the ceiling of the Maṇḍapa reaching almost the raised platform. The images are seated on the Ūñcal and rocked to and fro, to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music at intervals.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti (G. P. 5.) : Turning south from the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, we proceed to the Eastern Śrībalipura by the stone pavement which runs from the Gōpuravātal to the Śrībalipura. Near the entrance to the Eastern Śrībalipura there is seen the old shrine of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Hardly two feet in height, the small image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is portrayed in the typical sukhāsana. Though the various characteristics of Yōga Dakṣiṇāmūrti are found on the image, the sages and pupils usually shown as learning at the feet of the deity are not seen here. It is possible that the extremely small size of the shrine did not admit of this accompaniment. However, this image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti presents a strikingly age-worn appearance.

An enclosed porch, about 14½ feet in length and 9 feet in width, stretches in front of the Dakṣiṇāmūrti shrine. On the southern outer wall of this porch which abuts on the Garuḍāḻvār shrine appears a remarkably peculiar piece of sculptural representation, concerning which some legends have sprung up. A weighing balance is depicted, and, by its side is shown the scene of a person being trodden underfoot by an elephant. The popular version is that the theme represents the punishment meted out to a dishonest goldsmith for attempting to dupe his master Tirumala Nāyak.[8]

Ūṭṭupura and Maḍappaḻḷi : Entering the broad Eastern Śrībalipura, we proceed southward in the customary manner of taking a pradakṣiṇa or circumambulation.[9] When we come to the meeting place of the Eastern and Southern Śrībalipuras, we find two structures stretching eastward from the Southern Śrībalipura. They are the Ūṭṭupura, and farther east, the Utsava Maḍappaḻḷi. The Ūṭṭupura, the feeding place of brahmins, is an extensive hall, 74′ 10″ long and 31′ 5″ broad, large enough to feed numerous persons at a time. The brahmin visitors and pilgrims are fed in this hall on occasions of the minor festivals of the temple. On the other hand, in connection with the grand festivals or the Mahōtsavas celebrated in the months of Mārkaḻi (December-January) Cittirai (April-May) and Āvaṇi (August-September) the Ūṭṭupura is hardly sufficient to feed the vast concourse of brahmins. The feeding then takes place in the Southern and Western Śrībalipuras. During the Mahōtsavas, the Ūṭṭupura serves merely as an appendage to the Utsava Maḍappaḻḷi, the large cooking place. The Maḍappaḻḷi is a mammoth

8. See Infra Chapter V.

9 The traditional manner of undertaking a pradaksina is to proceed by the right of the deity and come around.

kitchen, 82 feet in length and 18½ feet broad, and has half a dozen prodigious ovens improvised with blocks of stone.

Southern Śrībalipura : Returning to the Southern Śrībalipura, we find ourselves in an imposing pillared hall, decidedly more picturesque than the Eastern Śrībalipura. The Southern Śrībalipura proper, excluding the space occupied by the Ūṭṭupura and the Maḍappaḷḷi, is 303′ 6″ in length, while its height is 21 feet. In the Southern, Western and Northern Śrībalipuras, abutting on the outer wall, there runs a raised platform, about 4 feet in height. The space above this platform is enclosed by wooden planks. Paddy is stored in some of these enclosures, while in others, vessels and utensils are preserved. The raised platform and enclosures above it are found right through, except for certain intervals here and there. Excluding the terrace, the width of the Southern Śrībalipura is 26′ 9″.

On either wing of the Śrībalipuras stand two long rows of well-carved massive pillars. The regular array of pillars ranging over a long space adds grandeur to the appearance of the lofty Śrībalipuras. On the faces of a considerable number of pillars in all the Śrībalipuras, excepting in the Eastern one, obscene figures and scenes are represented. This is one of the mysterious and inexplicable features common to numerous temples.[10]

To the north of the Southern Śrībalipura and to the south of the main temple lies an open courtyard. It is 25′ 7″ in length, but its width is not regular all through, because within the courtyard stand the Vasanta Maṇḍapa, and the shrines of Nīlakanṭha Vināyakar, Kaṅkāḷanāthar and Kailāsattu Mahādēvar.

Vasanta Maṇḍapa : The Vasanta Maṇḍapa is a splendidly constructed pavilion, 24 feet long and 21 feet 9 inches wide. Right in its centre is found a raised platform of stone, 19 feet long, 16½ feet wide and 3½ feet high. The outer surface of this platform is plated with well-polished brass sheets. On the edges, the cornices have been skilfully ornamented. During the Summer months, *viz,* from the Śivarātri down to the commencement of the Cittirai Utsava, the images of Śucindaperumāḷ and Umayammai, are removed to the Vasanta Maṇḍapa, where, they are kept on the platform for the whole season. The idea is that, during Summer, the deities are to be kept exposed to the free flow of breeze. Moreover, a concave passage, running all around the base of the platform, is filled with fresh cold water in order to produce a cooling effect.

10. See Infra Chapter XI.

Throughout the period when the images are stationed in this pavilion, the usual pūjā is performed here. The ceiling of the Maṇḍapa presents a recent painting of attractive floral designs.

Nīlakanṭha Vināyakar : (G. P. No. 6) : Immediately to the west of Vasanta Maṇḍapa and facing it, is found the nice little shrine of Nīlakantha Vināyakar. But the image of Gaṇapati inside is by no means proportional to the small size of the shrine. Mukkuruṇi Piḷḷayār, as the deity is popularly called, is of prodigious magnitude. To his left, actually on his lap is seated the Goddess. The figure of the Goddess is unduly small in relation to the image of Vināyaka. Even the two mice sculptured in front of the deity, appear to be far too small to play the role of the vāhana or vehicle of the deity. An entrance porch, 10½ feet long and 6¼ feet wide, stands in front of the shrine. This vestibule abuts on the western base of the Vasanta Manḍapa.

Sub-Store : To the west of the Vināyaka shrine there is a narrow room jutting out from the south of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. This room is called, in the present anglicized terminology, the 'Sub-Store'. It is in this room that the articles required for daily offerings like ghee, oil, camphor, sugar and pulses are kept. They are received from the authorities of the temple by the accountant and preserved in the Sub-Store, and are passed on to either the Śāntikkār or to the cooks in the Maḍappaḷḷi, whenever they are necessary.

Maḍappaḷḷi : The inner Maḍappaḷḷi is located to the west of the Sub-Store, with the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Manḍapa running in between them. In fact, this Maḍappaḷḷi is attached to the southern wing of the Namaskāra or Tekkēḍam Maṇḍapa. The Maḍappaḷḷi, as the temple kitchen, too, is called, has a number of ovens, big and small. The entire cooking needed for the daily offerings is done here. Besides sweetmeats and delicacies, a huge quantity of rice is cooked in the Maḍappaḷḷi every day Even at present, some of the temple servants, as well as those who have a permanent right by virtue of their age-old association with the pagoda, are assigned fixed allotments of the cooked rice after being offered as nevēdyam to the deities. Now, no less than 4½ kōṭṭas of rice are used for this purpose.[11]

Most of the regular recipients of these daily allotments sell them to the poor through certain contractors, who, incidentally, make a profitable business of this transaction. For thousands of poor destitutes this avail-

11. One Kōṭta = 21 marakkāls; 1 marakkāl = 8 paḍis or naḷis

ability of food at a low price is a real godsend. Particularly since the period of the second World War, which has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the price of paddy, this agency has afforded a substantial measure of relief to the poor folk of the locality.

Kaṅkāḷanāthar : (G. P. No. 7): To the west of the Nīlakantha Vināyakar Kōil there stands the Kaṅkālanātha shrine. It is a nice little structure, even smaller than the Vināyakar Kōil. There is the entrance porch, hardly 12 feet long and 10 feet wide, at the centre of which lies Nandi, the celebrated bull, facing the deity. The garbhagrha itself is barely 10 feet long and 4½ feet wide ; and a remarkable feature is that the garbhagṛha presents little ornamentation or embellishment but a plain beam of stone stretching across the inner wall. In the middle of that beam is seen the bronze image of Kaṅkāḷanāthar fixed on a pedestal of bronze.

Kailāsattu Mahādēvar · (G. P. No. 8) : A few yards to the west of the Kaṅkāḷanāthar Kōil there lies a huge piece of rock upon the northern end of which stands the ancient Kailāsanāthar Kōil. Enclosing this shrine, a wall has been erected on the rock so recently as 1917. On the face of the rock, both within and outside the wall appear numerous inscriptions, most of which are engraved in Vatteḻuttu script and Tamil language The construction of the new wall was unfortunately responsible for portions of certain inscriptions becoming hidden from view.

The shrine on the rock is described as that of Kailāsattu Mahādēvar, while popularly, the deity is known as Mahādēva of Southern Kailāsa.[12] A remarkable feature about the shrine is that it faces west. This, however, is not far too strange. The Āgamas themselves prescribe that a Śiva temple may face east or west. In South India there are a few ancient fanes facing west.[13] Not far away from Śucīndram itself exists the small, but ancient, temple at Tellāndi in North Nāñcināḍ, where the image of Śiva faces west. It may, however, be observed that most of the Śiva temples face east.

Inside, the Śiva linga and the Nandi opposite to it, appear to bear the marks of age. The pattern of the garbhagṛha itself suggests an early origin of the shrine. Apparently, the Mukha Manḍapa, the porch

12. Three famous shrines surnamed as Daksina (Southern) Kailāsa are those of Kālahasti ; Tiruccirāppallī and Tirukkōnamalai

13 Among temples facing west, the undermentioned ones are prominent :— Tiruvānaikka ; Kadavūr ; Kandiyūr ; Kārkudi ; Tirukkadaimudi , Tiruvānmiyūr ; Kollukkādu ; Kōṭṭūr ; Tirukkōvalūr ; Tirutturutti , Tirunallam ; Tiruppanandāl ; and Tiruvīrkudi

stretching in front of the garbhagṛha, seems to have been constructed later, though prior to the middle of the 13th century, as is evident from an inscription on its outer wall.

Cēravātal Śāsta : (G. P. No. 9) : At the westernmost extremity of the Southern Śrībalipura we find the small shrine dedicated to Śāsta. In the records of the temple the deity is described as Cēravātal Śāsta. To attempt to explain Cēravātal Śāsta as a corrupted form of 'Mēlavātal Śāsta' is to stretch the imagination too far. It seems as though the name was given after some Cēra ruler who set up the image.[14] The people in the locality use the appellation 'Hariharaputra', which is an alternative name for Śāsta. The image found in the sitting posture, is about 3 feet in height.

An apparently inexplicable circumstance is that in the same shrine, at the western corner, we see a small image of Gaṇapati. Hardly 1½ feet in height in the sitting pose, this small image presents also an age-worn appearance. Doubtless, it is older than that of Śāsta. Both the Āgamic prescription and common practice in South Indian temples require the establishment of either a Vināyaka or Śāsta shrine at the south-western corner of a Śiva temple. However, the more widespread practice is to erect a Vināyaka shrine at that spot. On the whole, the qualifying appellation given to the Śāsta here and the presence of a decidedly older image of Gaṇapati within the shrine, seem to suggest that it was a later introduction and that it was effected at the behest of a Cēra king.

Turning north of the Śāsta shrine, we see the Western Śrībalipura stretching before us. But, unquestionably, it is less imposing in appearance than its southern counterpart. For one thing, its length is only 227 feet, 76 feet less than that of the Southern Śrībalipura, though its width is 26 feet 9 inches, the same as in the other. Moreover, practically lined on the east by the back wall of the main temple and completely enclosed on the west by the western outer wall of the Śrībalipura, this part of the pagoda does not have adequate natural light. Nor is the door on the Western Śrībalipura kept open except on the 8th day of the Utsava. It is needless to add that the lesser amount of natural light in the Western Śrībalipura accounts partly for its less impressive appearance.

To the east of the Western Śrībalipura and practically abutting on the latter is the Vāhanappura, so called because the Vāhanas or vehicles are

14. See Infra Chapter V.

preserved there. The valuable silver vāhanas, like the 'Kailāsaparvata', the 'Ṛsabhavāhana', the 'Garuḍavāhana', the 'Annavāhana' and the palanquins are locked up within this Vāhanappura. Lest the vehicles should become rusty through want of air, the room is not enclosed by walls, but is merely protected by closely fixed iron bars and covered over by a wire netting.

To the east of the Vāhanappura there stands the carefully enclosed 'Old Strong Room'. Before the present 'Strong Room' was constructed near the Nāṭakaśāla, it is this cell which served as the treasury of the pagoda. Now, the less important role of the preserver of the vehicles and vessels has fallen to its lot

It is in the Western Śrībalipura, that the time-honoured practice of expounding the sacred Mahābhārata is continued every afternoon even at present. Doubtless, the number of listeners to the discourse has dwindled; however, the few who attend it, seem to be earnest and regular.

Rāmasvāmy Kōil : (G. P. No. 10) At the northern corner of the West Śrībalipura there appears the pretty little Rāmasvāmy Kōil. The images of Rāma and Sīta, in the sukhāsana pose, are hardly above 1′ 9″ in height. Near the entrance, on the south, stands the never-failing companion Laksmaṇa, while on the north, is the unerring devotee Hanumān. Both of them, playing as it were the role of dvārapālakas, stand in a devout pose of obedience, with their hands clasped in anjali. However, it is a foible on the part of the artists that both Lakṣmana and Hanumān appear disproportionate to the images inside. These two figures near the entrance are over 2¼ feet in height. The entrance to the shrine is now adorned by an exquisitely carved wooden structure in the form of an ornamental doorway. Though its intricate and skilful woodcarving is admirable, it is doubtful whether it constitutes an appropriate decorative element in front of an old shrine of granite. It has appeared there only since 1932 A.D.

The location of the Rāmasvāmy Kōil at the north-western corner of the pagoda is a rather uncommon feature. Normally in a Śiva temple, it is a shrine of Subrahmania which is found there. No doubt, the Subrahmaniasvāmy Kōil does exist to the north-west of the main temple; but, it is located far away in the interior. Evidently, the idea that Sthānumālaya embodies Trimūrti, explains the location of Rāmasvāmy Kōil in its present position.

Northern Śrībalipura : The shrine of Rāmasvāmy faces the northern Śrībalipura, unquestionably the most attractive of all the Śrībalipuras of the pagoda. Its length is only 263′ 9″, about 40 feet less than that of the corresponding Southern Śrībalipura. The disparity in the length of these two is accounted for by the fact, that at the eastern extremity of the Northern Śrībalipura appears the huge edifice, the Citra Sabha.

Proceeding eastwards from the Rāmasvāmy Kōil through the Northern Śrībalipura, passing by the array of huge pillars lining it on either side, we come to the temple's northern entrance from the street. Facing this entrance is found at the southern end, the doorway leading to the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa inside the temple. A porch with a slightly raised platform connects the northern entrance of the Śrībalipura with the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa. This porch is supported by two huge pillars symmetrically constructed. Standing as they do, on the eastern and western extremities of the porch, they are designed to serve a decorative purpose, as well. Each of the massive pillars is surmounted by an imposing turret of intricate stone carving. The crouching lion at the top, the overhanging corbel of the fully formed puspabōdigai variety, the rampant yāḷi lining the base of the pillar, all present a splendid appearance. Inside the half-opened mouth of the yāḷi, attached to the western pillar there is found a well-rounded ball of stone, which can be touched by inserting the hand into the yāḷi's mouth. A strange feature about this ball is that it seems small enough to be taken out, and yet, it is impossible to remove it. A popular story runs that once a ruler offered to make a gift of his kingdom to the person who could take out the ball of stone.

Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil : (G. P. No. 11): To the west of this porch, parallel to the Northern Śrībalipura, stand the Subrahmaṇia shrine and the enclosed Maṇḍapa in its front. A small portico, 6 feet by 4½ feet, leads westward to the enclosed pavilion. Attached to the pillar on either side of the entrance to the portico, there appears an elaborately carved figure of granite. Each bearing a sword and shield, the two figures, at first sight, seem to be Dvārapālakas of the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine. But the one on the north is depicted in a dancing pose, with the left foot resting on the pedestal and the right foot raised up to the waist in the course of a rhythmic movement. On the other hand, its counterpart on the south has both its feet fixed to the stone pedestal. Both the figures present intricate and dextrous carving. The head-dress, the armour, the jewels and the drapery are all elaborately carved, even to the point of grotesqueness. It is obvious that such artistic display is not

likely to have been wasted on Dvārapālakas. Moreover, the characteristic feature of the latter is an awe-inspiring demon-like appearance, which is by no means true of the figures under consideration. In fact, they appear to be none other than representations of the war-like aspect of Subrahmaṇia himself.

This inference is corroborated by a piece of sculpture on one of the pillars in front of the shrine. This sculptured figure, though on a miniature scale, is exactly of the same pattern as that on the southern side of the entrance to the portico. The only additional feature in the sculpture of the smaller figure is that it is depicted as trampling its left foot over a fallen person and thrusting a sword deep into his chest. Evidently, the representation is nothing but the Purāṇic theme of Subrahmaṇia doing to death the Asura Sūrapadmananda.

Proceeding westward by the portico, we enter the enclosed Maṇḍapa in front of the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine. Extending over an area 22 feet long and 10 feet broad, this porch is conspicuously large in relation to both the shrine and the portico in its front. This hall, known in early records as the Iḷayanayinār Maṇḍapa, was one of the meeting places of the Yōgakkār during the palmy days of their power. Having no window on any of its walls, the hall remained until 1941 devoid of natural light. In 1941, some of the slabs of the ceiling were replaced by iron railings thus letting in ample light and air.

At the western end of the porch, on a stone pedestal, there is found a short stoutish figure, sculptured in the padmāsana pose. The dwarfish appearance of the figure has suggested to many that it represents the celebrated Agastya. The plausibility for this suggestion is reinforced by the legend of Agastya having been the preceptor of Subrahmaṇia. Moreover, the reference to Agastya's pilgrimage to Śucīndram in the Sthalapurāṇa is supposed to lend colour to the myth. But the unmistakable representation of a nail struck on the outspread palm of his right hand furnishes a clue to the proper identification of the figure.

There is a tradition that, during the reign of Bālamārtāṇḍavarma of Travancore (1798 to 1810 A.D.), an employee of the Śucīndram Temple Treasury was found guilty of a fabrication of the accounts. When the offence was brought to the notice of Vēlu Tampy Daḷava, the relentless minister, he ordered this cruel punishment of driving a nail into the palm of the culprit. Furthermore, in order to strike terror into the minds of the other employees, he caused sculptural representations of the victim to be set up in the temple. In this connection, it

is noteworthy that an exactly similar piece of sculpture is found to the north of the Amarabhujangaperumāḷ image in the first prākāra. While the one in front of the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine is slightly mutilated, that stationed in the first Prākāra is well preserved.[15]

On the whole, there does not seem to be any reason to disbelieve the version about Vēlu Tampy's association with these pieces of sculpture. Vēlu Tampy's sternness is proverbial and is amply borne out by the hard-hearted measures adopted by him as minister. Driving nails into limbs of the culprit was a common mode of punishment employed by this tyrannical administrator.

Near the above-mentioned sculpture there is found a pair of feminine lamp-bearers of stone, one at the southern and another at the northern wing of the hall. An interesting feature is that the southern figure has her tuft of hair in front in the Malayāḷi fashion, while the northern one bears the tuft at the back part of the head like the rest of the lamp-bearers in the temple.

From the inscription engraved on the pillar presenting the northern figure we learn that it represents one Sītamma who appears to have provided the construction of the porch. Her mother was Mālaikkuṭṭy, and, apparently the southern figure represents the mother. It is interesting to observe that while the mother's mode of dressing the hair is of the Malayāḷi pattern, the daughter's is of the Tamilian fashion. They belonged to the group of Dēvadāsis attached to the Mahādēva temple in Kēraḷapuram, about 14 miles to the west of Śucīndram.

A small vestibule, one foot raised from the ground-level of the Maṇḍapa leads to the shrine. The image of Subrahmaṇia in the samapādasthānaka pose is 3½ feet in height; Vaḷḷi and Dēvasēna, each rising to about 3 feet, are seen to the right and left of Subrahmania respectively.

Jayantīśvara shrines (G. P. Nos. 12-17): To the south-west of the prominent Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil, and abutting on the Western Śrībalipura, stand the much-misunderstood Jayantīśvara shrines. Popularly, they are spoken of as the 'Pañcapāṇḍavar Kōil.' The genesis of this popular appellation is traceable to the fact that, outwardly the group seems to consist of five shrines, for, though in reality they are six in number, the vimānas are but five. On the basis of this circum-

15. This sculptured figure has been recently shifted to the vestibule in front of the Subrahmaniasvāmy shrine.

stance, later, the tradition-monger's ingenuity sought to explain the presence of six shrines by holding that five are dedicated to the five Pāṇḍavas and the sixth one to Pāñcāli. The fact that one of the shrines symbolizes the Śrī Cakram is employed to associate it with Pāñcāli. Another tradition is that the shrines were originally established by the five Pāndavas themselves.

In the light of known data, all these legends vanish into thin air. Actually, the six deities enshrined are, from north to south (1) the Goddess Durga, or rather Gauri, as is described in the epigraphic record; this Goddess is Pārvati, said to be represented here in the rajōguṇa form; (2) Śiva, or Śambhu, as the inscription has it, (3) Śrī Cakram; this is really Śrī Dēvī or the Goddess in the form of Śrī Cakram. The underlying idea of this form is that it is a representation of the Goddess as a personification of Nature. It is held that this conception portrays, in fact, the lofty Upaniṣadic idea of godhead;[16] (4) Lord Kṛṣṇa; (5) and (6) Śiva Lingas.

Apart from the confusion caused by traditions, the temple records are responsible for certain inaccuracies. The placards hung up before each of the shrines describe them respectively as (1) Jayantīśvarattu Durga, (2) Jayantīśvarattu Mahādēvar (3) Jayantīśvarattu Śrī Cakram (4) Jayantīśvarattu Śrī Kṛṣṇa (5) Jayantīśvarattu Nārāyaṇēśvarar, and (6) Jayantīśvarattu Rāmēśvarar.

There does not seem to be any justification for associating all the shrines with Jayantīśvara. The pativu kanakku (accounts of expenditure) of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) speak of Jayantīśvaramudaiya Mahādēva, Jayantīśvaramuḍaiya Durga and merely Śrī Cakram, Kṛṣnasvāmy, Nārāyaṇēśvarar and Rāmēśvarar. Obviously, since Jayantīśvara was applied to two shrines of the group, the others were also associated with that name later. The accounts of 994 M.E. appear to have transformed the name Jayantīśvara or Jayantanēśvara into Jayantīśvaramuḍaiya Mahādēvar. In truth, Jayanta, or rather Śēndan Śivindravādi of Puttillam, founded the shrines of Śambhu and Gauri, as is clearly stated in the inscription of 768 M.E.[17] The deity set up by Śēndan was obviously called 'Śēndanīśvara' or Jayantīśvara. The

16. R. Anantakrishna Sastri in his booklet "The Bhūtās, Prētās and Piśāchās"; p 19—states that the Cakra is connected with the Yantra, which, though popularly associated with black magic, plays no inconsiderable part in the Vedic ritual. It is interesting to note that the great temple at Śringēri Mutt in Mysore, is built in the form of Śrī Cakra.

17 See T. A. S. VIII, p. 32

modification introduced by the records of 994 M.E., and what is more, the application of the qualifying word Jayantīśvara to the other shrines of the group are all erroneous and misleading. Unquestionably, the Śivalingas at the southern end were set up by one Nārāyaṇa and Rāma respectively. Who established the three others is unknown.

All the six shrines are very low structures, though the Vimānas are prominent. The doorway of each of the shrines is hardly 3½ feet in height, and the interior of the shrines is so dark that even at mid-day it is difficult to have a darśan of the images without the help of artificial light.

Kāla Bhairavar : (G. P. No. 18) : Returning to the Northern Śrībalipura, about the middle of it and just to the east of the northern entrance to the temple, we find the shrine of Kāla Bhairavar, facing south. The shrine itself is small, though its Vimāna appears to be disproportionately huge in size. The image in the standing pose, is hardly 3½ feet in height. Believed to be one of the guardian deities of the temple,[18] Bhairava is first worshipped by those entering the pagoda through the northern entrance.

The 'Musical Pillars' : Facing the Kāla Bhairava shrine appear the marvellous pieces of art, the so-called Musical Pillars. These are constituted by the four groups of pillars, two on the north and two on the south, standing parallel to each other. The two northern groups present each a cluster of 24 pillars, while the southern ones present each a cluster of 33. A striking feature is that all the pillars of each group, together with the exquisitely carved turret at the top of each group, are chiselled out of a single block of granite ; and, none can deny the intricate and splendid workmanship displayed. Moreover, the pillars are endowed with musical properties. A tap on each of the pillars in a group produces a different sound. True, the variation in sound is not so conspicuous as in the case of similar 'Musical Pillars' in other temples, as for instance, of the Nelliyapparkōil of Tirunelvēli ; nevertheless, it is distinguishable here, too.

The Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa : The two southern groups of the Musical Pillars form the northern props of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa. Attached to each of the two southern pillars of this Maṇḍapa it is, that we find two portraits, apparently, of Vēṇāḍ sovereigns. Executed with skill and grace, they constitute two of the most splendid portraits in stone appearing in the entire temple. They are perhaps equalled in

18. The temple records speak of this deity as Kṣētrapāla.

artistic excellence, but certainly not surpassed, by the group of portraits in the Garudālvār shrine. The question of identifying the kings portrayed in the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa was a difficult one, but in the light of new facts learnt from the temple records, it is possible to ascertain their identity. Doubtless, one of the kings is Kārtikai Tirunāḷ Rāmavarma, the Dharma Rāja,[19] who was the architect of the Kulaśēkhara Mandapa of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple in Trivandrum.

Aṛamvalattamman Kōil. (G P. No 19)· Immediately to the east of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa, in between Śrībalipura and the outer northern wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa, stands facing east the shrine of Aramvalattamman of legendary fame. It is a small structure, though in comparison with the Rāmasvāmy Kōil and the Kāla Bhairava shrine, it is decidedly bigger. An entrance porch, 6½ feet long and 4 feet wide, leads to the shrine. Nandi, in the characteristic lying posture, is found in the centre of the porch. The image of Aramvaḷattamman, cast of bronze, is in the standing samapādasthānaka pose, about 3 feet in height. The vimāna over the shrine has been renovated recently, and it presents modern artistic work Attractive though the vimāna is, it stands in marked contrast with the age-worn main structure; and, the contrast has a somewhat disharmonious effect. The origin of the shrine of Aramvalattamman is enshrouded in mystery. The legend, widely believed by the people of the locality, runs as follows:

One Paḷḷiyaṛai Nācciyār, a lady belonging to a respectable family of the Nāñcināḍ Veḷḷāḷa community of Tērūr, proceeded to Śucīndram for worshipping Sthāṇunāthasvāmy on the 17th of Māśi 619 M.E. (about the 1st of March 1444 A.D.). She was accompanied by her daughter who was about 13 years of age. Tradition avers that, while ardently worshipping the deity, the girl suddenly disappeared. The popular belief is that, through the intensity of her devotion and sincerity of her piety, she became united with the God.[20]

This mysterious occurrence was responsible, so it is said, for the rise of the Aṛamvaḷattamman shrine. Paḷḷiyarai Nācciyār, the mother of the 'semi-divine' girl, had a shrine constructed for the 'blessed one', and endowed it with landed property for the conduct of the daily oblations and the pūjā. A piece of unimpeachable evidence is available regarding

19. See Infra Chapter XII.
20. This legend bears a marked resemblance to that of the celebrated Āndāl of Vaiṣṇava tradition.

the construction of the shrine and the endowment of property by Palliyarai Nācciyār in 619 M.E A record of the temple dated the 5th of Māśi 933 M.E. (1758 A.D.) makes a specific reference to the mysterious incident and the foundation of the shrine.[21]

Now Aramvaḷattamman is treated as the Dēvī of the temple. Every year on the Makha Naksatra (Natal Star) of the month of Māśi (February-March) a Tirukkalyānam or marriage, symbolic of the union of Aramvaḷattamman with Sthāṇumūrti, is celebrated with great eclat. The descendants of Pallyaṛai Nācciyār's family meet part of the expenses of the celebration. They play the role of the bridal party in connection with the sacred marriage and bring to the temple new clothes, sandal, turmeric and other formal requirements.

Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa : The portion to the north and to the east of the Bhairava shrine is known as Alaṅkāra Manḍapa, since the decoration of the Vāhanas and the Utsava images during the festivals takes place in this part of the temple.[22] In ordinary times some of the less costly wooden vāhanas are kept here. The Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa is much wider than the rest of the Śrībalipura, for, beyond the Bhairava shrine, there has been an extension to the Maṇdapa southwards, the total width reaching 37′ 3″. The extended portion is supported by eight stout pillars, four on either side. Each one of these pillars presents on all its faces exquisite sculptures of gods and goddesses. In fact, the other pillars on the northern wing also are decorated with sculptures of a decidedly superior quality than those in the rest of the Śrībalipura. Not only that; in this place, no obscene representations on the pillars mar the beauty or sanctity of the temple. Indeed, it is clear that when the Śrībalipura was constructed, this portion was purposely designed to serve as the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa.

Āñjanēya : (G. P. No. 20) : At the easternmost extremity of the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa, almost touching the outer wall of the Citṛa Sabha, stands the prodigious image of Āñjanēya, 16′ 4″ in height. Carved exquisitely out of polished stone, this imposing figure is unquestionably a product of marvellous sculptural skill. Doubtless, it takes high rank among the huge images of Hanumān found in the whole of India.

It is learnt that this mammoth piece of sculpture lay underground from 1740 A.D. till so late a date as 1872 A.D. That year, in connection

21. See Appendix No. I
22. Popularly the Kulaśēkhara Maṇdapa is referred to as part of the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa since some of the Vāhanas are decorated there.

with the renovation of the Dhvajastambha, the earth near the western base of the Gōpura was removed, and it was then that the image was discovered. The popular belief is that it was kept hidden underground at the time of Candā Sāhib's attack, and that, its existence was totally forgotten for many years. Though in 1872 A.D. the image was unearthed and taken out of the pit, it was lying exposed on the courtyard near the tower for well over 50 years. This delay, however, was not caused by neglect or apathy on the part of the authorities; the re-fixing of it at an appropriate place within the temple was apprehended to be an extremely difficult and risky task. It was not until 1929 that this feat was successfully accomplished.

The image of Hanumān, though sculptured in a stupendous proportion, is shown here too, in the characteristic worshipping posture The present location of Āñjanēya is quite appropriate, because he is seen facing the Rāmasvāmy Kōil at the western end. However, the ludicrous disparity in size between the worshipper and the worshipped is conspicuous.

Citṛa Sabha : (G. P No. 22) : Turning to the east of Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa, we see the elevated edifice, the Citṛa Sabha, facing south. Erected at a height of 4½ feet from the ground level and overlooking the entire Eastern Śrībalipura, the Citṛa Sabha has a grandiose appearance about it. It is 43′ 6″ long and 42′ 6″ broad, while its height is 21 feet above the terrace, which itself, as noticed above, is 4½ feet elevated from the ground.

At the entrance to this pavilion, on either side of the flight of steps is found standing a monolithic elephant, elegantly carved. The elephants are shown as fully caparisoned and bedecked with cloth and jewels. Touching the trunk of the elephant, to the right of the entrance is represented another small elephant lying in a crouching position. But, a corresponding feature near the elephant to the left of the entrance does not appear.

Above the flight of steps, the monolithic pillar on the eastern side of the entrance presents a finely executed sculpture of Kaṅkāḷanāthar, 6′ 4″ in height. Attached to it are the usually accompanying figures of Guṇḍōdhara, Mōhini and others, all carved out of the same monolith. A similar pillar on the western side of the entrance presents a skilfully chiselled figure of Gōpālakṛṣṇa playing on the flute. Exactly of the same height and size as the figure of Kaṅkāḷanāthar, it stands perfectly sym-

metrical to it. Unfortunately, the tip of the flute is found mutilated; but the rest of the sculpture is in an excellent state of preservation.

The Citṛa Sabha is supported by two rows of pillars, four ranged on either wing. Each one of these massive pillars presents sculptures representing Purānic themes. The first pillar on the western side bears the fascinating representation of the Ūrdhvatāndava form of Śiva, with the accompanying figures of Brahmā, Visnu, Patañcali, Kāraikkālammai and others, all carved on different parts of the same monolith. Exactly facing this, the pillar on the eastern row depicts Kāli in her rampant dancing pose It is obvious that these two complementary sculptures portray the celebrated dancing contest that Śiva and Kāli are believed to have held.

On the third pillar of the western row appears the sculpture of Vyāghrapāda. Patañcali and Vyāghrapāda are the two saints reputed to have invoked Śiva to dance, and hence, it is in perfect accord with the Purāṇic lore that they appear in the Citṛa Sabha, where the Ūrdhvatāṇḍava of Śiva is so prominently sculptured. Other pillars show Arjuna with his bow and arrow, Bhīmā with his mighty mace, and Hanumān with his never-failing Anjalihasta. It is, however, difficult to explain the exact significance of these figures in the Citṛa Sabha; apparently, they have been incorporated merely for the purpose of decoration. Whatever the object, it has to be mentioned that the sculptures portraying Aṛjuna, Bhīmā and Hanumān are by no means of a high order. Unquestionably, they are inferior to the specimens of sculpture which adorn some other parts of the temple.

The third pillar on the eastern row bears a piece of sculpture which is of more than ordinary interest. Though mutilated in parts, it is easy to observe that it portrays a king. The moustache, the kingly demeanour and the shield are all there; probably his right hand, which is now found mutilated, held a sword. Moreover, both to his right and left appear attendants in a reverent attitude indicative of implicit obedience. The dress, the tuft on the front part of the head and the manner of holding the shield leave us in no doubt that they are Malayāḷi attendants of the king. On the whole, the monarch portrayed, was in all likelihood, a Vēṇāḍ sovereign.

The holy sanctum (G. P. No. 22), situated in the middle of the northern wing of the hall is quite different from that of other shrines; instead of the image, only a mirror, about 4 feet by 3 feet, appears. But, here too, pūjā and nevēdyams are offered twice daily with

the same punctiliousness as in other shrines. The popular conception about its significance is that it represents the form-less aspect of Śiva, and that, the mature devotee realizes godhead in the Citra Sabha even without the medium of an image. It is held that, as one sees his own reflection on the mirror, he is enabled to attain self-realization. But the temple record of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) speaks of Cidambarēśvarar of Citṛa Sabha. Does the mirror signify that deity? Evidently, the hall represents the theatre of Naṭarāja's dance, and the mirror in the shrine symbolizes Naṭarāja himself.

However, the shrine built of brick and mortar, appears to be out of harmony with the pavilion which is a granite structure. The front part of the shrine has become outworn and shows signs threatening dilapidation. Hence, a carved wooden structure, similar to the one at the entrance of the Rāmasvāmy Kōil, was set up in 1930 flanking the entrance to the shrine.

In the centre of the Cītṛa Sabha, facing the sanctum of the shrine, there lies a rectangular monolith, measuring 5′ 2″ long, 2′ 6″ broad and 2′ high, which now serves as the balipīṭha. All around the base of this monolith are sculptured, alternately, elephants in the standing posture and cobras with raised hoods. It is learnt that this well-carved block of stone was formerly found in the original Vasanta Maṇḍapa to the south-east of Tekkēḍam shrine, and that it was removed to its present habitat in 1933 A.D.

Vallabha Gaṇapati : (G. P. No. 21) : On the base of the Citṛa Sabha, two niches are found, one on either side of the entrance. The Western niche contains the image described as Vallabha Gaṇapati. The image in the sitting pose is barely one foot three inches in height. The astounding feature of the representation of this Gaṇapati is that his proboscis is seen contacting the genital organ of a woman standing close by. It must be mentioned that this is not a type of image peculiar to the Śucīndram temple; it is but a form of Ganēśa akin to Uccisṭa Gaṇapati found in several temples.[23]

The popular version about the genesis of this form of Gaṇapati is rather strange. It is said that Gaṇēśa was once engaged in a conflict with the Asura Sūrapadmạ. In the struggle, Gaṇēśa found, to his utter despair, that the moment he vanquished one Asura, another was given birth to by his mother Vallabhi and that the struggle was thus prolonged. Hence he resorted to the stratagem of preventing the mother from giving

23 See Infra Chapter XIII

birth to any more child. Vallabha Ganapati is said to be a representation of this theme.

But the sacred texts do not speak of this story. In fact, the Uttarakāmikāgama definitely states that the woman standing by the side of Ganapati in similar representations is the Goddess called Vighnēśvari However, both the texts and the popular report agree that Ganapati in this role is a great giver of boons and that he is worshipped by people who wish to realize their desired objects.

Subrahmania · (G. P. No. 23) : The niche on the eastern side, corresponding to the former, contains a small image of Subrahmania shown seated on the peacock, his Vāhana. Subrahmaṇia is found here with only a single face and two hands. The height of the image poised on the peacock is a little over 2½ feet

Dēvēndra Vināyakar · (G. P. No. 24) : A courtyard stretching to the east of the Citṛa Sabha separates the latter from the shrine of Dēvēndra Vināyakar. The appellation of Dēvēndra Vināyakar is given to the image of Ganapati enshrined here, because it is believed that the repentant Dēvēndra, before he purified himself by bathing in boiling ghee as ordained by the Trimūrtis, was worshipping this Gaṇapati. The Sthalapurāṇa offers a vivid description of the legend and refers to Indra's worship of this Gaṇapati.[24] The image of Vināyakar is seen in the characteristic sitting pose and is about 1½ feet in height; it presents a worn-out appearance, and seems to belong to an early date. Just to the east of the shrine of Dēvēndra Vināyakar is the small Nīrā̱li, where Indra is believed to have taken his bath before he worshipped Ganēśa. The outer structure enclosing the Nīrā̱li is of recent date.

Retracing our steps back to the Citṛa Sabha, we proceed to the Eastern Śrībalipura stretching in front of it. On the eastern wing of the Eastern Śrībalipura, situated from north to south, are found a Vāhanappura, the Mākkāḷai (Nandi) and the shrines of Kon̲rayaḍināthar and of Garuḍālvār. This group of structures and shrines stands facing the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. The Vāhanappura, which has been renovated recently, is utilized for keeping some of the wooden Vāhanas and certain pieces of wooden furniture.

Nandi : (G. P. No.3) : Abutting the southern wall of the Vāhanappura, lies the stupendous Nandi, the huge representation of an ox made of brick and mortar, finely plastered on the outer surface. It is graceful. At first sight, it looks as if it is shaped of white rice flour ; obviously

24. See Infra Chapter IV.

this accounts for the popular description of it as Mākkāḷai.[25] The bull is depicted in the characteristic pose of Nandi; it is noticeable, however, that the head is held aloft at a higher angle than is usual. Consequently, that expression of submission which is typical of Nandi lying before Śiva, is conspicuous by its absence here Notwithstanding this flaw, it is, on the whole, a carefully executed work of art. The Mākkāḷai is 12′ 8″ in height, 21′ in length and 9′ 6″ in girth, this Nandi is decidedly bigger than the one in the Bṛhadīśvara temple at Tanjāvūr.[26] In fact, the Śucīndram Mākkāḷai can be considered as the second biggest in India, the first being the one at Lepākṣi in Hindupūr Taluk, Anantapur District. Massiveness in size, however, has not been secured at the expense of artistic beauty. From the standpoint of the proper proportion in the formation of the various limbs and the excellent finish secured in the workmanship, the Śucīndram Nandi is a better piece of art than its lithic counterpart at Tanjāvūr. A popular tradition is current that the Mākkāḷai continues to grow in size imperceptibly, and that, when eventually as a result of its expansion, the Nandi touches the ceiling of the Maṇḍapa, a devastating deluge and extermination of the universe would ensue.[27]

A strange miracle is associated by local tradition with the Mākkāḷai, in connection with the attack of Candā Sāhib It is well-known that Candā Sāhib undertook a plundering expedition into Travancore in 1740 A D., and that, rushing through Tōvāḷai and Ittaṅkād, he attacked the pagoda at Śucīndram. The story runs that, after having mutilated several images and works of art in the temple, he approached the Mākkāḷai. Out of sheer derision he asked the priests of the temple whether the bull would eat straw, and added that, if it had divine power, it should. On their replying in the affirmative, he is reported to have commanded some straw to be thrown in front of Nandi in order to test its power. Candā Sāhib and party, after going round the temple giving free vent to their iconoclastic fury, returned to the spot, when they were

25. 'Māvu' (മാവു) means flour To explain the derivation of the word Mākkāḷai as a contraction of Mahā Kālai meaning the great ox, as has been suggested, seems far-fetched and improbable

26. But the Nandi in the Tanjāvūr temple is a monolith weighing about 25 tons, while the Mākkālāi of Śucīndram is made of brick and mortar.

27. There is almost an identical tradition concerning the Nandi in the Bṛhadīśvara temple; but there, it is added that its growth has been arrested by driving a nail into the back of the bull. Yet another story, current there, runs that there was a live toad within the Nandi, which circumstance accounted for the growth of the bull, and that later the toad was removed It need hardly be added that all these inventions are fabrications of tradition-mongers.

amazed at what had occurred The bull had partaken of the straw and had digested it, and cow-dung was seen there ! The finishing touch to the story is that the iconoclast was at once all praise for the deity and that he desisted from further vandalism.[28]

Just in front of the huge Mākkālai is found a very small bull carved in stone. Every day pūjā and oblations are offered to both the Nandis. At no time will the Nandis be seen without garlands decking them.

Konṟayaḍināthar · (G. P. No. 1) : Immediately to the south of Mākkālai, facing the sanctum of the main temple, is the Konṟayaḍinātha shrine of great celebrity. It is reputed to present a svayambhu or natural-born linga. Popular legend has it, and the Sthalapurāṇa confirms it, that the Trimūrtis, in response to the prayer of the sage Atri and his wife Anasūya, appeared there in the form of a linga. The belief is that the top, middle and base of the linga represent Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā respectively.

One deviation from the Sthalapurāṇa version is, however, noticeable on close scrutiny. In reality the Konṟayaḍināthar image is not constituted by one linga. Three small lingas are seen close to each other. Throughout day and night, except when the abhiṣēkha takes place, a silver angi or mask representing three faces decks the lingas. On ceremonious occasions a magnificent silver mask showing more of ornamentation is used. Abutting on the Eastern Śrībalipura, a small entrance porch, 9 feet by 3½ feet, runs in front of the shrine. Exactly behind the shrine is the sacred Konṟai tree, or rather, its vestige. Its branches have all withered away long since, and at present, only the huge central stem of the tree is seen carefully propped up. The time-honoured practice of pouring on it sacred water, chanted with Rudra mantra, eleven times daily has continued to this day.

Garuḍāḷvār : (G. P. No. 4) : Right to the south of Konṟayaḍināthar shrine appears that of Garuḍāḷvār. Measuring 6′ 4″ in height and standing over a raised platform of stone 3′ 3″ above the ground level, the image of Garuḍāḷvār is at once imposing and splendid. Facing the sanctum of the Viṣṇu shrine of Tekkēḍam, the Garuḍāḷvār shrine is

28. The Ācārakkanakku of 916 M E (1741 A.D.) speaks of the expenses incurred in connection with the purificatory ceremonies. Evidently, they were performed after Candā Sāhib's sacrilege of the temple. Several people of Śucīndram still associate this alleged incident with Tippu. This is clearly a mistake, for there is not even a shred of evidence in support of Tippu's visit to the place. On the other hand, the Matilakom Records and the Mudaliyār Manuscripts unmistakably refer to Candā Sāhib's attack of the temple at Śucīndram.

most appropriately located. Garudālvār, the reputed Paramabhakta, the devotee of Viṣṇu, stands here with his hands clasped devoutly in anjali. An excellent image, carved out of fine gneiss, it preserves a shining appearance, thanks to the abhiṣēkhams of oil and water it receives daily. On the four corners of the raised platform appear certain exquisitely carved portrait sculptures. Though different identifications of these portraits have been attempted, the great probability is that the group represents Tirumala Nāyak and his kinsmen.[29] The entire terrace has been recently enclosed by iron railings in order to ward off the pranks of mischievous visitors.

We now turn towards the inner shrines of the pagoda Facing the Eastern Śrībalipura and stretching in front of the Garuḍāḷvār and Konṟayaḍinātha shrines, runs the porch called the Āditya Maṇḍapa, otherwise known as the Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa. On the west, it abuts on the great Cempakarāman Mandapa. The two Dhvajastambhas of the temple, one in front of the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy shrine and another in front of the Tekkēḍam Perumāḷ shrine, are found fixed within this porch, and hence its popular appellation Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa.

The Dhvajastambha or the Koḍimaram opposite Vaḍakkēdam rises to a height of 64 feet 3 inches, and has, at its top, a tiny bronze figure of Nandi in the lying posture. The other Dhvajastambha facing Tekkēḍam is 56 feet in height, and, at its top, is seen the small bronze image of Garuḍāḷvār with anjalihasta. Both the Dhvajastambhas are covered by well-polished shining sheets of bronze.[30] In accordance with the provisions of the Āgamas, that portion of the Dhvajastambha which is planted underneath the ground is four-sided; that portion which is submerged in the pīṭha is octagonal, while that standing aloft above the pīṭha is round in shape. The sides of both the Dhvajapīṭhas show elaborate carving, though in point of the area of its surface, the one in front of Tekkēḍam is slightly smaller than the other.

To the west of the Āditya Maṇḍapa stands the magnificent pavilion, the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. The entrance to the northern part (the Vaḍakkēḍam portion) of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa is flanked by the Dvārapālakas of huge proportions. Each of them is 6 feet 9 inches in height, and presents a fierce and awe-inspiring appearance, with protruding teeth and a ghastly look. The Dvārapālaka on the right is

29. See Infra Chapter XII.

30. Several rich temples like those of Tiruppati and of Tiruvallikkēṇi present Dhvajastambhas covered by thin sheets of golden plates.

known as Āḷkoṇḍār, and the one on the left as Uyyakondār. On the corresponding entrance in the south, facing Tekkēḍam, two rampant Yāḷis take the place of Dvārapālakas.

In between the two Dvārapālakas on the northern entrance, there is a tiny courtyard 4 feet square, at a level one foot lower than that of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. This is the place where the famous ordeal of boiling ghee (Kaimukku or Pratyayam) was conducted. Above this place, on the ceiling, there is a small opening of about 3 square inches, in order to allow the sun's rays to fall on the spot below, so that the ordeal could be held with the celestial Sūrya (Sun God) himself as a holy witness. The pillar immediately to the south of the Kārakakkaḷaka, as the venue of the ordeal was called, presents the sculptured image of Gaṇapati. Described as 'Sākṣi Gaṇapati', this deity was propitiated as the witness to the Kaimukku Ordeal. The sacred test was believed to have been conducted under his auspices.

Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa: The Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, measuring 110 feet by 85 feet 3 inches and rising to a height of 32 feet, is a huge pavilion, unquestionably the biggest of its kind in the entire temple. Excellent pieces of art embellish the faces of its numerous pillars. Two rows of massive well-carved pillars line the northern section of the Maṇḍapa and two other rows line the southern half. Altogether, 32 attractive pillars support the edifice. Besides these, at the entrance to the northern part of the Maṇḍapa, on either side, stands a huge column containing 16 pilasters surmounted on top by an ornamental turret.

Each of the 32 pillars within the pavilion presents a number of panels bearing lively sculptural representations of Purāṇic deities and scenes. The edges of the pillars contain linear carvings of outstanding merit. While the intricate designs presented by them compel one's admiration, the rather extravagant artistic display produces a less happy effect than would otherwise have been the case, if the exuberance of details were more restrained.

It is interesting to find that the pillars lining the northern and southern wings of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa present figures and themes chosen from both the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite mythology. Doubtless, the majority of the sculptures in front of Vaḍakkēḍam and of Tekkēḍam are Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite respectively in their setting. But several exceptions do appear. Representations of Ardhanārīśvara and Kaṇṇappar, for instance, figure on the southern section, while those of

Gōpālakṛṣṇa and Narasimhamūrty appear on the northern pillars. This feature indicates that, at any rate, in the 15th century A.D. when the Cempakarāman Mandapa was constructed, this part of Travancore was not vitiated by the rancour between the Śaiva and the Vaiṣṇava sects, which deplorably marred the harmony among the Hindus in the Coromandel region.

The ceiling of the entire Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa presents carvings of floral designs which have been tastefully painted. On the lower base of the four sides of the ceiling of the Tekkēḍam section, scenes from the Rāmāyana are delineated on stone. From the commencement of the Putrakāmēsṭi Yāga, right up to the Paṭṭābhiṣēkha on Rāmā's return from exile, the leading scenes of the epic are vividly portrayed. The corresponding portion on the northern section of the Maṇḍapa delineates scenes from the Śaiva Purāṇas. However, the friezes on this side present a much less crowded appearance than on the southern sector. On the whole, even in spite of frequent white-washing, the skill exhibited by the friezes is clearly perceptible.

In the centre of the northern section of the Cempakarāman Maṇdapa there is found a rare pattern of chair made of brass. Four and a half feet in height, and having a skilfully carved seat with an equally ornamented back and two arms, it is a unique piece of furniture in a temple. Local tradition has it, that it was presented to a Travancore sovereign by a Portuguese general, and that the ruler, in turn, made a gift of it to the Śucīndram pagoda. Who the particular monarch was, there is no means of knowing. The chair is called 'Parangi Nārkāli' which indicates its origin.

Several inscriptions are engraved on the inner and outer walls of the Cempakarāman Manḍapa. On either of the northern and southern walls four perforated windows are found. Besides, about the middle of both the northern and southern walls, an opening, 3 feet wide, exists. It was not apparently intended as a doorway, for, on the sides of this opening, inscriptions appear. Since epigraphs of the 15th century A.D. figure, including the one inscribed within 10 years of the completion of the edifice, these openings must have formed part of the original construction itself. With the perforated windows and the broad openings on the two walls, and above all, with the wide open space south of the Maṇḍapa, there is plenty of natural light inside the pavilion.

Vīra Pāṇdyan Mani Mandapa Abutting on the western extremity of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa lies the narrow porch known as the Vīra

Pāṇḍyan Mani Maṇḍapa. It is 89′ 4″ in length but only 5′ 3″ broad. So far as ornamentation of the pillars, style of the corbels and patterns of the Kūḍus are concerned, the contrast with the corresponding features of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa is quite striking. On the whole, it is decidedly a less pretentious structure than the one to its east. A huge bell is hung up in front of the door leading to Vaḍakkēḍam, while another is found in the corresponding spot in the south.

Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Mandapa. From the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Mani Manḍapa we proceed first to the Vaḍakkēḍam portion of the temple. The hall leading to the inner precincts of Vadakkēḍam from the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa is the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇdapa, presumably called so by reason of its association with Udaya Mārtāṇḍa, a Travancore king.[31] It is 48′ 6″ in length and 31′ 3″ in width, but only 9′ 2″ in height. Immediately to the north of this Maṇḍapa is found a narrow dark room called the Kalaśappura where, on special occasions, chanting of mantrams takes place. It is dark; recently, however, some opening has been contrived to be made on the ceiling of the Vīra Pāṇdyan Maṇi Manḍapa, thanks to which, there is more light in the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Manḍapa than in the corresponding Ardha Maṇḍapas of other temples. Four short stoutish pillars, two on either side, support the hall. Its western doorway, through which we enter into the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa, is flanked on either side by a row of brass lamps.

The Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa: This is a small structure, only 31′ 3″ long, 17′ 8″ wide and about 9′ high. In spite of two perforated windows on the southern wall, very little natural light is to be had within. At the centre of the hall lies the Ṛṣabha or Nandi of stone (G. P. No. 35), facing the deity of the sanctum sanctorum. On the four sides of Nandi, except for the openings on the west and east which allow the darśan of the sanctum sanctorum, the space is filled with strings of brass lamps, which, during the 'Dīpārādhana' at night, present a glow of light, and add to the splendour and sublimity of the occasion.

The Sabhāpati Shrine: (G. P. No. 34) : To the north-west of Nandi, enclosed by the northern wall of the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa, stands the shrine of Sabhāpati or Naṭarāja. The Āgamas allocate a south-facing position for Naṭarāja by the side of the principal deity in a Śiva temple, and the location of the Sabhāpati shrine in the Śucīndram pagoda is in perfect accord with it. The image of dancing Naṭarāja is about 3 feet in height,

31. See Infra Chapter V, for the identification of the King.

and it stands on a raised pedestal. Encircled by a shining prabha, the ornamental arch, the image appears very attractive.

The Sabhāpati shrine contains a number of the Utsava images of the pagoda. On a raised platform of stone running to the left of Sabhāpati, appear the bronze images of Māṇikkavācagar, Sundaramūrti, and Sambandar, as well as of Astradēvar. On another platform running north to south, on the western side of Sabhāpati, are seen the images of Gaṇapati and of Skanda.

Now we turn to the very sanctum of Vaḍakkēḍam, the seat of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy. To the west of Nandi is a small passage at the end of which rises a flight of steps leading to a corridor. The corridor and the inner shrine to the west of it are thus about 2 feet elevated from the level of the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa. The corridor is about 8 feet long and 3½ feet wide. The garbhagṛha to the west of the corridor presents the Śiva-linga, (G. P. No. 36), which is about 2½ feet in height. Except during abhiṣēkha, the linga is decked with either a gold or silver (aṅgi) mask.

There is a traditional belief that the water, oil, or milk, poured on the image during the abhisēkha or the holy bath, passes through an underground passage and reaches the ocean at Kanyākumari. No doubt, there exists a spot in Kanyākumari designated as Sthāṇutīrtha. One thing is certain; there is no passage at all for water to flow out from the shrine. Unless surreptitiously the water is removed from a pit in the garbhagṛha by the arcaka, for which no evidence is available, it has to be believed that there is an underground passage. It is an age-old prescription that the arcaka should never divulge what happens inside the shrine. Popular tradition avers that, at Sthānutīrtha at Kanyākumari, the abhiṣēkha water and the flowers which decked the Sthāṇumūrti linga the previous day, are seen flowing in. Yet another belief shared by many in the locality is that within the garbhagṛha cobras are occasionally seen.

Now we take a pradakṣiṇa or circumambulation of the Garbhagṛha of Vaḍakkēḍam. Walking by the south of the Nandi, we come to a narrow passage proceeding westwards. In this passage, immediately to the south of the Vaḍakkēḍam Garbhagṛha, there are three small shrines dedicated to Durga, Gaṇapati and Śaṅkaraṇārāyaṇa respectively.

Durga : (G. P. No. 27) : The shrine of the goddess Durga stands facing west. The image carved of stone is in the standing pose, about 2 feet in height. The goddess in a Śiva temple is invariably located to the north of the principal shrine. Apparently the shrine of Aṛamvaḷattam-

man satisfies this requirement here. By no means can the image of Durga, enshrined to the south of the principal deity, be considered as playing the role of the chief goddess ; it is clearly one of the minor images of the temple.

Mūḍu Gaṇapati : (G. P. No. 28) : Proceeding a few steps westward, we come to the shrine of Gaṇapati, facing north. This, too, is a tiny shrine ; in fact, like the two others in the series, it resembles more a niche than a shrine. The image looks very old. The trunk of Gaṇapati appears flattened and the limbs present a worn-out appearance.

The records of the temple describe this god as Mūḍu Ganapati and as Brahmarūpa Vināyakar. Does Mūḍu Gaṇapati connote the basic or fundamental Gaṇapati or does the term 'Mūḍu' signify 'concealed' or 'covered' ? Perhaps, it is in the former sense that it is employed here. However, the appellation Brahmarūpa Vināyakar indicates the significance of the deity ; Brahmā assumes the form of Vināyaka.[32] Evidently, since Brahmā could not figure in a temple as a separate deity on account of traditional injunction, he appears in the role of Gaṇapati. If so, the location of this shrine in the midst of the Garbhagṛhas of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam is not inappropriate.

Śaṅkaraṇārāyaṇa : (G. P. No. 29) : To the west of the Ganapati shrine is that of Śaṅkāranārāyaṇa, facing east This, too, is a small shrine, the image being hardly over two feet in the standing pose. The typical features of this deity, combining the elements of Śiva and Viṣṇu, are carefully delineated on the image. The right half represents Śiva and the left half Viṣṇu. The upper right arm presents the maḻu or the axe and the lower right the abhaya mudra, while the upper left arm bears a conch and the lower left a club. On the right earlobe is found the tōḍu, the ear-ornament worn by Śiva, but on the left is the Makarakuṇḍala, much smaller in size, though showing more of ornamental work.

Beyond the shrine of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa lies a small courtyard between the outer wall of the Vaḍakkēḍam Garbhagṛha and the porch which encircles the first prākāra. Along the whole range of the prākāra are found figures of feminine lamp-bearers, attached to each of the 24 pillars. But, the heads and arms of all these figures except in respect of one at the north-eastern end, have been mutilated ruthlessly. The popular report is that Candā Sāhib was responsible for this act of vandalism.

32. Ganapati is associated with Brahmā even in the early Aitarēya-Brāhmaṇa I., 21. The only known case of a temple dedicated to Brahmā is found in Kumbakōṇam.

The records of the temple and other sources of information confirm the fact of Candā Sāhib's attack of Śucīndram, and hence, it is perfectly probable that he was the author of this sacrilege.

It is not a little surprising, how, one alone among the lamp-bearers was left unaffected. An interesting explanation is offered by the local people. By the side of this particular lamp-bearer there is a Śivalinga fixed to the 'āvaḍai' or the pedestal. The popular story runs that, on seeing the Śivalinga, which had a clean-shaven head like that of the typical Muslim, a wave of sympathy flashed across his mind and that, consequently he spared the lamp-bearer near the image. Obviously, this explanation looks more ingenious than convincing. It is not unlikely that, by sheer chance, this particular figure was left unmutilated.

Turning to Tekkēḍam, we find that there is a huge hall between the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa and the Garbhagṛha of Tekkēḍam. Nearly 80 feet long and 29½ feet broad, it occupies the corresponding space covered by the Ṛsabha Maṇḍapa and the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa together. The inner shrine of Tekkēḍam (G. P No. 31) presents, at the innermost sanctum, the standing image of Visṇu shaped in Kaḍuśarkarai. The figure, rising to about 7½ feet, is a handsomely executed piece of art. In front of that image, on a small pedestal, there appear the golden images of Viṣṇu in the middle and of Śrīdēvi and Bhūdēvi to his right and left respectively. A small hall, 15 feet by 12½ feet, stretches in front of the Garbhagṛha, which forms the ardhamaṇḍapa of the shrine, leading to the Garbhagṛha.[33]

33 Thus the temple of Śucīndram is sacred for all the Trimūrtis. Particularly, both the Śaivites and the Vaiṣnavites hold the pagoda in high esteem. This temple is one of the few that present both Viṣṇu and Śiva as the principal deities, although the Sthānumūrti or Śiva shrine has become the more prominent one.

Examples of South Indian Śiva temples which present also the Visnu Shrines are:

Name of the Place	*Name of the Visnu deity.*
1. Cidambaram	Gōvindarājaperumāl
2. Pāndikkodumuḍi	Renganātha
3 Tirunāvalūr	Varadarājapperumāl
4 Tirunelvēli	Nellai Gōvindar
5 Tirunana	Ādikēśavapperumāl
6. Tiruvattār	Ādikēśavapperumāl
7. Kacci Yēkambam	Nilattundaperumāl
8 Kodi Madaccenganūr	Ādikēśavapperumāl
9. Cikkal	Kolavamanapperumāḷ

Garuḍālvār · (G. P. No. 30) : At the southern wing of the Tekkēdam Maṇdapa is seen the figure of Garudālvār in his characteristic pose of submission to Viṣṇu. This sculptured figure, hardly 2½ feet in height, is found in a niche of the Manḍapa.

Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāḷ . (G. P. No. 32) : A passage to the south of the Garbhagṛha takes us to the first prākāra which encircles the shrines of both Tekkēdam and Vadakkēḍam. Proceeding westwards, at the south-west corner we find the old image of Visnu in the reclining pose. Described as 'Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāḷ' in the later records, this image is none other than that spoken of in the early epigraphs as 'Amarabhujaṅga-perumāḷ'. The image is about 5 feet in length, and it is shown resting on the coils of a serpent whose hood is held up over the head of the image.

Śucīndaperumāl · (G. P. No 33) : A few yards to the north of Paḷḷi-koṇḍaperumāl is the shrine of Śucīndaperumāḷ. It is located just behind Vaḍakkēḍam. The shrine has a small room in front, and the Garbhagṛha extends about 3½ feet to the west of the regular outer wall of the first prākāra. The bronze images of the shrine present Śiva and Umā seated on a pedestal, while, on a different pedestal facing Śiva is a standing image of Umayammai. Śucīndaperumāḷ appears to be identical with the Sōmaskandamūrty set up in 1126 A.D. Skanda, however, is not now found in the group. Perhaps this image is the same one appearing in the Sabhā-pati temple.[34] The images of Śucīndaperumāḷ with Umā seated on his left and of Umayammai in the standing pose are all used as Utsava images of Sthāṇumūrti and Pārvati.

A remarkable feature of the Śucīndram temple is its compactness. Although the shrines within the temple are well over thirty in number, they are all situated within fairly easy reach of each other. The total area of the temple precincts is about 93,900 sq. feet, the length of the northern outerwall being 402 feet 10 inches and that of the western one 233 feet 4 inches.

34 See Infra Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

LEGENDS

From early times, a body of copious legends had gathered around the fane at Śucīndram. With the growth of the temple, the legends developed still further. The Sthalapurānā, or Sthalamāhātmyam, of Śucīndram embodies the full-fledged account of the legendary origin and greatness of the temple. Appearing first in the Samskṛit language, the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa was, in due course, rendered into Tamil̲ and Malayāḷam. The legendary account of the Śucīndram temple, as unravelled by the Sthalapurāṇa, runs briefly as follows :—

The renowned sage Atri and his life-partner, the devoted Anasūya, perform a severe penance in the Himālayan region, with the object of securing redemption from the unceasing rounds of births and deaths. Eventually, Visṇu appears on the scene and tells them that they may attain salvation by leading the householder's (Gṛhastāśrama) life in the Jñānāraṇya near the Southern Ocean. Betaking themselves, accordingly, to that holy place, they reside in an Āśram near Prajñātīrtha, the sacred tank in the Jñānāraṇya.[1]

After a time, Brahmā summons Atri to Brahmalōka (Brahmā's abode) in order to have his help in the conduct of a holy sacrifice.

1. 'Jñānāraṇya' is the region of forests around Śucīndram. Later in the Purāna, this region is also described as the 'Santānakānana'. 'Prajñātīrtha' denotes the sacred tank of the village.

Taking leave of Anasūya after giving her his Pādōdakam (water used for washing his feet) which is to serve as her source of protection, Atri proceeds to Brahmalōka. During Atri's absence from his Āśram, the great Gods of the Holy Triad, Brahmā, Visnu and Śiva wish to put to the test the renowned chastity of Anasūya. First, a scorching drought is caused, and a consequent famine ensues. But Anasūya, through the power of her immaculate chastity, invokes the aid of Atri's Pādōdakam, and thereby hails rain and rescues the suffering people. The three Dēvas, not content with this test, come down to the Earth and proceed to Atri's Āśram in the guise of old mendicants begging for alms.[2] She makes elaborate preparations for feeding them, but then comes the strange request of the guests that Anasūya is to be nude while serving them food.[3] Anxious to avoid discomfiture for her guests, and at the same time, unable to comply with their fantastic request, she is at her wit's end. Suddenly remembering about the Pādōdakam of her hus-

2. In connection with the advent of the Trimūrtis to Atri's Āśram for testing Anasūya's chastity, a popular legend is current, which, however, does not find a place in the Sthalapurāna in any of the versions. It runs as follows : Once, while Atri is away in Brahmalōka, Nārada, the sage, visits Atri's Āśram along with some of his companions. Anasūya receives them warmly, and grants each of the Rsis the gift he desires, through the miraculous power of Atri's Pādatīrtha. Amazed at the might of Anasūya's chastity, Nārada, who always revelled in rousing jealousy, devises an ingenious scheme for humiliating the pride of the three great goddesses Pārvati, Sarasvati and Laksmi On his way back from Jñānāranya, he takes some gram-shaped iron pieces from Marungūr, an adjoining village, and proceeds to the Dēvalōka and requests the three goddesses to fry them for him. The Dēvīs admit their inability to comply with Nārada's request At once he takes them to Anasūya, who, with the aid of the Pādatīrtha of Atri, succeeds in frying them The goddesses, on being told about it, feel jealous of Anasūya In order to lower the prestige of Anasūya's chastity, they induce the Trimūrtis to proceed to Jñānāranya in the guise of old beggars and bring about some blemish on her fame.

It must be observed that, not only is no mention made of this story in the Sthalapurāna, but a positive piece of evidence contained in it, runs counter to its plausibility. Later, in Sarga 5 of the Samskrit Purāna, it is stated that the goddesses expressed a surprise that the Trimūrtis should have tried to test Anasūya's chastity knowing full well that Pātivrttya or womanly chastity was far more efficacious than all penances.

3. It is said that the mendicants pretended that they had taken a vow not to partake of food served by a woman dressed in her clothes. Anasūya, at first, deprecates their request as thoroughly unbecoming of them. They, however, insist on her compliance, at the threat of fasting themselves unto death.

न ददासि यदि प्राज्ञे विवस्त्रान्नं पतिव्रते ।
एतत् करोदकं भुक्त्वा प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामहेवयम् ॥

band, she sprinkles it on the three mendicants, praying for their transformation into babies. Once again, by the miraculous power of the Pādōdakam, her wish is fulfilled. The great Dēvas, now in the form of innocent babies, are fondled by noble Anasūya.

Meanwhile, the goddesses Sarasvati, Laksmi and Pārvati, learning through Nārada about the strange mishap that has befallen their lords, come down to Atri's Āśram in order to redeem them. Anasūya welcomes them cordially with sweet words of reverence. She is, however, constrained to state that the Dēvas can be restored to their old forms only after the return of Atri from Brahmalōka.[4] On the suggestion of Anasūya, the Dēvīs then proceed to the bank of Prajñātīrtha close by, and perform penance which is known as the Ārudravṛata. The merit of doing penance at that spot, as well as the details of its observance, are expounded to them by Nārada.[5]

After the completion of the sacrifice in the Brahmalōka Atri comes back to his Āśram and Anasūya receives him with profound respect. Having learnt from Nārada all about the visit of the Trimūrtis and the strange consequences which have followed, Atri expresses the wish that the Dēvas may be restored to their normal form. Anasūya, once again with the aid of the Pādōdaka, re-transforms the Trimūrtis to their old selves.[6] Supremely pleased with the noble couple, the Dēvas permit them

4. Connected with this scene, there is a popular story which is not mentioned in any of the Sthalapurānas. The story runs thus When the Dēvīs come to Atri's Āśram, the babies are found each in a cradle. Unable to identify their respective lords, each takes by mistake a different baby and caresses and fondles it. Anasūya is amused at the situation. In order to humble the arrogance of the goddesses, she invokes the God of Fire to restore immediately the Trimūrtis to their normal form. Her prayer is granted. Then ensues a comic scene. The awkward circumstance of the Trimūrtis, clasped in the embrace of the wrong persons, is revealed Brahmā is in the arms of Laksmi, Śiva of Sarasvati and Visnu of Pārvati. Soon Anasūya terminates the awkwardness of the situation by transforming the Trimūrtis again into babies.

5. This penance is stated to have subsequently formed the basis of the Ārudra festival, which is the Mahōtsava celebrated in the temple in the month of Dhanus or Mārkaḻi.

6. There is a story that Nārada at first rouses the rage of Atri by adverting to the mysterious presence of the babies in the Āśram The mischief is alleged to have its effect. Atri rushes to the Āśram in hot haste, and, wild with fury, demands of Anasūya an explanation for the presence of the babies. The paragon of chastity politely, but courageously, narrates all that had happened. That appeases the sage and even makes him repent for his hot and impatient words. This story appears to be a later popular addition to the body of legends, and bears even an indecorous flavour about it. It is gratifying to observe that it does not at all figure in any of the versions of the Sthalapurāna.

to ask for any boon they may like to have. Atri desires that they be blessed with the eternal darśan of the Trimūrtis, while Anasūya wishes that the three gods are to be born as her children. Their requests are complied with[7] and the Trimūrtis themselves appear as the three sons of Atri and Anasūya in the form of Candra, Dattātrēya and Durvāsa. Furthermore, in order to afford them perpetual darśan, the Trimūrtis consent to manifest themselves in a Svayambhu Mahālinga along with, and in front of, an eternally alive Aśvatha tree (Ficus religiosa), which is of the form of the primary Pranava.[8]

There springs up the Aśvatha tree, and immediately to the west of it, the Mahālinga, which embodies the Trimūrtis Of the tree as well as of the linga, the bottom part is held to represent Brahmā, the middle Visṇu and the top Śiva. Then Lord Śiva himself appears in person and blesses Atri and Anasūya. He proclaims that the tree will remain Aśvatha in the Kṛta Yuga, but will become transformed into Tulasi in Tretā, Vilva in Dvāpara and Rāja Vṛkṣa (Konṟai) in Kali Yuga.

The rest of the Purāṇa is taken up, to a large extent, by accounts of the renowned sages and saints who come to worship the sacred tree and the glorious linga. Vēda Vyāsa, Vasistha and Vāma Dēva are among those who arrive at the holy place in the Dvāpara Yuga and worship the Mahālinga and the immortal tree. In the Kali Yuga, the famous sage Śaṅkarācārya, who is mentioned as an incarnation of the great Śiva himself, visits the shrine, witnesses the enthralling dance of

7. It is commonly believed that Atri and Anasūya were granted the rare privilege of enjoying the vision of the Trinity at any moment, at their mere wish Popular tradition has it that the Trimūrtis are even now seen in the form of a Garuda on the Aśvati Naksatra in the month of Dhanus or Mārkaḻi The ceremony of this Garuda Darśan is observed even at present on the fifth day of the Mārkaḻi Utsava.

8 Concerning the emergence of the linga, an interesting story appears in the body of folklore connected with the temple. Living in a neighbouring village is a shepherdess, who has to cross the Jñānāranya every day, while proceeding to sell milk and curds. Day after day, a strange event occurs as she passes by a particular group of bamboos in the forest. Her feet get entangled with the cluster of bamboos, and the milk and curds that she carries are spilt on the ground Tormented by the loss and unable to account for the mysterious occurrence, at last, she intimates the fact to her husband. The shepherd rushes to the spot, accompanied by his friends, and, forthwith cuts down the bamboos. They are amazed to find blood oozing out suddenly from the broken bamboos. The sacredness of the spot is realized by the shepherds. The presence of the Jyōtilingam gets impressed upon their faith, and at that very spot, they erect a shrine, which serves as the nucleus of the sacred temple.

Naṭarāja in the Citṛa Sabha of the temple and enjoys perfect bliss.[9] Eventually Śiva himself appears at the spot and imparts the Praṇavōpadēśa or the great secret mantra to Śaṅkarācārya, his devoted disciple.

Following this appears the well-known story of the purification of Indra at the place. Indeed, it is by virtue of Indra's redemption at the temple, that the place is stated to have acquired its name Śucīndram.[10] The story runs that Indra incurs the wrath of the sage Gautama by a dastardly attempt at violating the chastity of his devoted wife, Ahalya. Wild with fury, Gautama curses Indra, as a consequence of which, his entire body becomes covered with feminine genital organs. Greatly afflicted by the disgrace and misfortune, desperate Indra seeks the help of his preceptor Bṛhaspati. On his advice, he resorts to the Pūrṇajyōti Sabha in the Jñānakānana for penance in order to secure redemption.

While Indra is coming down to Jñānakānana, on the bidding of Śiva, Nandikēśvara arrests his progress. Indra is, therefore, obliged to leave his chariot on the outskirts of Jñānakānana. Consequently, that place comes to be called Rathapura or Tērūr. This village, located about a mile to the north of Śucīndram, is still known as Tērūr.[11] However, undaunted by the rebuff, Indra resorts to a hillock in the vicinity called Gōraksapura and commences a severe penance there. In order to obtain

9. Śankarācārya's prayers to the Sthānulinga are said to be embodied in 21 ślōkas. The last of these is recited every evening near the Konrayadi after the evening oblations That particular verse runs as follows:

नमोऽस्तु वागीशहरीश्वराय नगेन्द्रचापाय नदीधराय ।
नाम्ना शुचीन्द्रेश इति स्तुताय ज्ञाना टवीशायनमः शिवाय ॥

10. 'Suci' means purity and Śucīndram denotes the place where Indra attained purity.

11. Tradition current in Tērūr points to a spot near the tank, found almost in the middle of the village, as the place where Indra is believed to have alighted before proceeding on foot to Śucīndram The tradition goes on to state that the car and his elephant, which were left behind, later became submerged in the tank. In fact, until recently, on the southern bank there was a Tillai tree, and, on the northern bank, a pipal. The proverbial saying runs as follows:

"தேர் தாழ்ந்து தில்லை முளைத்தது
யானை தாழ்ந்து அரசு முளைத்தது"

The appearance of such popular lines on the basis of folk-lore, in utter disregard of truth, is far too common in South India. A faint conformity to a popular legend and an artificial alliteration of sounds are enough to give rise to such sayings. Its absurdity, in this case, is clearly seen from the fact that, according to the Sthalapurāna itself, the Airāvada proceeded north to the Malaya mountain, and gorging it by its tusk, caused a river to flow towards Śucīndram.

water in the place, Indra directs his devoted elephant to cause a river to flow from the Malaya mountain. This is accomplished, and the river comes to be known as Dantanadi or Kōṭṭār. Eventually, Indra arrives at the Pūrṇajyōtikṣētra, as the Sthalapurāṇa describes the sacred fane of Śucīndram, and worships the Trimūrti Linga. After a time, Śiva appears and prescribes to Indra the method of purification.[12] He is asked to bring a golden image of Nandi from Kailāsa. Meanwhile, Śiva orders a hall to be built in front of the Rāja Vṛkṣa or Konṟai tree, where, in the presence of the three hundred members of the Sabha, Indra is asked to enter a cauldron of boiling ghee and take out the golden Nandi, immersed in it. Indra follows every one of the instructions carefully.[13] On his emergence from the boiling ghee, he is found to be his old handsome self, with the deformities completely removed. Every one is supremely delighted with the redemption of Indra. Śiva proclaims that, thenceforth the Prajñātīrtha should be called Dēvatīrtha, Pavitratīrtha as well as Trimukhatīrtha, and that the Sthala or place itself should be surnamed Śucīndram.

Anxious to conduct his worship of Sthānulinga regularly, Indra asks Viśvakarma to construct a temple at the place. Accordingly, a magnificent pagoda, a tank, garden, streets and houses for the residence of the people of various castes are constructed. The entire village presents a delightful appearance. Indra then expresses his desire to reside permanently in Śucīndram, the sacred place of his redemption, conducting perpetual worship there; but Śiva, stating that it is not necessary, allows him to return to Heaven.

The Sthalapurāṇa next proceeds to narrate how Hālāmṛta (the son of Aja, of the Solar Dynasty), then engaged in performing penance at the Mahēndra mountain, is invited to rule over the land.It is interesting to find it mentioned that Hālāmṛtā's rule is carried on with the help of

12. Śiva tells Indra that for securing the redemption of his sins he would prescribe a penalty or Prāyascitta, and Indra agrees to act accordingly

तथैवाहं करिष्यामि प्रायश्चित्तं सुरेश ते |
ज्ञानपूर्वं कृतस्यास्य कर्मणो ज्ञानकानने ||
मद्रूपाग्नि मुस्वात् सम्यक् शुद्धोभव शचीपते |
संमानय सुरश्रेष्ठ तदर्थं पद्मलोचनम् ||

13. The popular version that, on the advice of Brhaspati, Indra immersed himself in the vessel of boiling ghee 1008 times, uttering the sacred mantram, does not find a place in the Sthalapurāna.

his sister's son, born of brahmin father.[14] How, for the promotion of commerce in the locality, 1000 vaniyās are created and endowed with the necessary help by Brahmā and Śiva is then narrated. After that, there appears an account of the Subrahmania Ksētra of Marungūr, located to the north-west of Śucīndram. It is followed by the story of Viśvakarma who worships Sthānulinga in order to secure the release of the oceans.

The succeeding one, which is more important, relates to the penance of Kanyā at the Sthāṇutīrtha in Kanyākumari. Dēvī, in the form of Kanyaka, desires to be united with Śiva. Therefore, she is asked to perform penance on the sea-coast at a place, located to the east of Śucīndram. The penance is to be carried on during the entire period of the twelve pralayams, at the end of which, Śiva agrees to appear and sport with her.[15]

Accounts of the worship of Sthānulinga by Agastya and Paraśurāma appear next. Then comes a description of the worship performed by the Cēra, Cōla and Pāndya monarchs. The Pāṇḍya worships Mṛtyuñjaya on the banks of Dantanadi (Kōṭṭāṟ); the Cōla worships Sthāṇulinga, while the Cēra performs his penance before Kanyā. The latter, eventually, appears and bids the Cēra sovereign proceed to Śucīndram and witness the glorious dance of Śiva there. He acts according to her instructions, and becomes enchanted with the darśan of Śiva's dance.

The story of Viṣṇu presenting darśan to Vyāsa in the Punnāgavana follows.[16] Some of the minor stories, not of importance in respect of the Śucīndram temple, like those of Kalāvati, Nārada, Parvata and Sanaka, and their association with the place are narrated thereafter.

14. हालामृतोऽसौ जितवर्यं जात :
जुगोप साक निजभागिनेयै : |

See also stanza 37 of Sarga XIV of the Tamil Pūrāna:

உலகின் மன்னுயிர்க் கின்னுயி ரன்னவ னுடனுற்
றிலகு தங்கையை யங்கொரு வேதவிந் திவனென்
றலகில கீர்த்தியோ ரந்தணன் வேட்பவாங் கனிந்தந்
திலக மன்னவ டருமரு காகனொடுஞ் சிறந்தே

15 The Kanyākumari Sthalapurāna also adverts to the same legend connected with the Dēvī (Kannika) and Sthānu Śiva, appearing before the Dēvī, asks her to continue the penance at the tip of the southern coast until the period of the Pralayams, till which time, he himself would remain a bachelor at Jñānakānavana (Śucīndram)

16. This seems to be a reference to Madhusūdhana, who appears in the form of Śēsa at Parakkai, about a mile to the south-west of Śucīndram.

Of greater interest is the story dealing with the redemption of Ahalya, for it throws light on the sanctity of the Śucīndram temple as a 'divine court of justice.' When Indra provokes Gautama by his misconduct, Gautama curses not only wicked Indra for his misbehaviour, but also his own wife Ahalya. She is condemned to be transformed into a stone until God Viṣṇu incarnates on earth as Dāśarathi and treads on that stone with his holy feet. At the pre-ordained time, the prophecy becomes fulfilled. Ahalya is restored to life by the touch of Rāmā's feet. But an unexpected situation arises, when Gautama is found reluctant to accept Ahalya even after her redemption from the curse. Gautama insists upon her passing through fire for the sake of purification. Thereupon, the Dēvas advise him to proceed with Ahalya to the temple at Śucīndram, for that is the 'Śōdhanakṣētra,' the shrine where innocence is tested. According to their advice, Gautama and Ahalya betake themselves to Śucīndram, and, in the presence of the brahmins of the place, Ahalya passes through fire and emerges unscathed, thus vindicating herself.

The very last section of the Sthalapurāṇa speaks of Yājñavalkya's advent to Śucīndram. How he secures darśan of Sthānulinga, and after intensive prayer becomes absorbed with the deity, are all described at length.[17]

Critical Estimate of the Legends: The legends connected with the temple do not constitute history in the accepted sense of the term. Nor can they be considered as idealized or exaggerated history. Products of imagination and not of reason, the legends are intended to appeal to faith and not to conviction. Full as they are of impossible events, they are erected upon an unquestioning belief in the supernatural agency. Therefore, it may seem rather futile to dissect such fanciful tales with the weapons of historical criticism. Nevertheless, an examination of the Sthalapurāṇa and other uncollated traditions serves a useful purpose. How and when the legends arose, what element of truth, if at all, is imbedded in the tangle of legends, what light they throw on existing institutions and practices in the temple, and finally, how far the legendary lore of Śucīndram has been influenced by the traditions of other places are all interesting, though delicate, pieces of study.

17. In the Tamiḻ Sthalapurāna, it is stated that the Samskrit Purāna calls this particular section as the Yājñavalkya Sarga and that, the Tamiḻ accounts found in the palm-leaves describe it as 'Ākkinavarki Śarkam.' Incidentally, it affords an unmistakable proof of the earlier date of the Samskrit Sthalapurāna.

One disconcerting circumstance regarding the origin of the Sthalapurāṇa confronts us at the very outset. It professes to derive its source from the Skānda Purāṇa, one of the celebrated 'Mahāpurānas' of the land. But, neither the Samskṛit nor the Tamil versions of the extant 'Skānda Purāna' contain any reference to the Śucīndram account.[18] However, it has been urged by several scholars that portions of the original South Indian version of the Skānda Purāṇa exist in Grantha script in different places of South India. Should this statement prove true, the original source of the Śucīndram Purāna might be unearthed. Future researches alone can determine the legitimacy of this hope As it stands at present, the 'Skānda Purāṇa' cannot be considered as the source of the Śucīndram Sthalamāhātmyam.

The date of the Sthalapurāna: When did this Sthalapurāṇa come into existence? Even the Samskṛit 'Skānda Purāṇa,' to which alleged source it is traced, is not ascribable to a date earlier than the 7th century A D.[19] That apart, the reference to Śankarācārya's visit to Śucīndram, recorded in the local Purāṇa, reveals that it could not have arisen before the 8th century A.D.

Moreover, a negative piece of testimony, suggesting a comparatively late origin of the Purāṇa, is found in the fact that it employs the names 'Sthāṇu' and 'Sthāṇulinga'. So far as inscriptions go, the earliest reference to 'Sthāṇu' appears only in the epigraph of 646 M.E. (1470 A.D.). Therefore, it was not much earlier than 1470 A.D., if earlier at all, that the Śucīndram Purāṇa would have appeared.

Nor is it by any means certain that, in or about the 15th century A.D., the Sthalapurāṇa assumed its present shape. In fact, it appears from the available data that the Purāṇa was composed only so late as the 18th century A.D. It is important to remember that, in this, as in many other matters connected with the temples of South India, the features appearing in one place profoundly influenced those of the neighbouring ones. The art of imitation is nowhere seen more operative than in the case of the South Indian temples.

Doubtless in the South, it was about a couple of centuries ago that there appeared an infectious wave of enthusiasm for Sthalapurāṇas.

18 Not only the Sthalapurāṇa of Śucīndram but those of Kanyākumari, Tirukkuṟṟālam, Tiruvorriyūr and of numberless other temples in South India trace their fountain-head to the Skānda Purāṇa. However, none of them is found at present in the Skānda Purāna.

19. Pargiter: 'Indian Historical Tradition'., p. 49.

An ever-increasing craze for ennobling every pagoda by an alluring glorification of its past was then the order of the day. That craze has, in the main, continued during the past two centuries, and, so far as the minor shrines are concerned, ingenious brains are busy at the task even at present. To mention a familiar instance, Minakshisundaram Pillai of Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, the most renowned of the Tamiḻ bards of the last century, used to provide Sthalapurāṇas to order.[20]

The Tamiḻ Sthalapurāṇa: Assuming that the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa was first set to writing sometime in the 18th century—and it has to be a broad assumption only, for, neither the style nor the language of the Purāṇa affords any dependable basis of inference—what can be said about the date of the Tamiḻ and the Malayālam versions? The local belief is that it was only so late as the last quarter of the 19th century A.D. that one Muttamiḻ Kavirāyar of Nāñcināḍ composed the Tamiḻ version of the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa. The author clearly states that he derived his data from the Samskṛit Purāṇa, as well as from the Tamiḻ accounts found in the palm-leaf records. Probably, the Tamiḻ Purāṇa was compiled in the 18th century A.D.

An indirect circumstance lends support to this view. We learn that the Tamiḻ Tirukkuṟṟāla Sthalapurāṇa was written by Tirukkūdarājappakkavirāja Mūrtikal sometime in the neighbourhood of 1640 Śaka Era, viz., about 1718 A.D. This is evident from a patta or document of this date registering a grant of land to the above-mentioned Kavirāja as a reward for his composition of laudatory verses on the lord of Tirukkuṟṟāla (Tirukkuṟṟālattiruvañci). Apparently, the author's Sthalapurāṇa of Kuṟṟālam preceded this work by a few years. The influence of the Tirukkuṟṟālam temple on that of Śucīndram can be distinctly observed. For instance, the new name Citra Sabha appears to have been imported into Śucīndram from the more famous Citra Sabha of Kuṟṟālam. Is it not probable that the Tirukkuṟṟālam Sthalapurāṇa and the Śucīndram Purāṇa were intimately associated with each other?

In this connection, it is interesting to find that the Tamiḻ Sthalapurāṇa of the neighbouring illustrious temple of Kanyākumari wās composed only subsequent to the appearance of the Tamiḻ Purāṇa of Śucīndram. This is indubitably proved by the reference to the latter found in

20. Sundaram Pillay; Early Sovereigns of Travancore, p. 7.

the Kanyākumari Sthalapurāṇa itself.[21] But the view hazarded by Aruṇācalakkavirāyar, the author of the Kanyākumari Purāṇa, that it must have been originally composed four or five centuries prior to his time, seems unsustainable. The only basis, and that a feeble one, for his inference is that the Kanyākumari Purāna begins by describing the glory of the land in which the temple is situated, whereas later writers like those of Tiruviḷayāḍal Purāṇa commence their treatises by speaking of Tiṇai, viz., the traditional divisions of land into Kuriñji, Mullai, Marudam and Neydal of the Tamiḻ Gramarians. A purely negative piece of evidence, this affords no conclusive proof of his contention.

The Malayālam Sthalapurāṇa · Turning to the Malayāḷam Sthalapurāna of Śucīndram, fortunately, we have the specific mention of the year 1864 A.D. as the date when it appeared. The author of this work was none other than Pāchu Mūttadu, the earliest historian of Travancore and the illustrious ancestor of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar. However, Pāchu Mūttadu does not mention whether his work was a translation of the Purāna into Malayālam, or merely an adaptation of an earlier Malayāḷam version. In the absence of information to the contrary, it seems reasonable to hold that Pāchu Mūttadu was the earliest translator of the Purāṇa into Malayāḷam At once a historian, poet, gramarian, astrologer and scholar of high repute, he would not have spent time in merely copying down an existing Purāna. A translation of the Samskrit Māhātmyam into Malayāḷam for the first time was, no doubt, an undertaking worthy of the great writer.[22]

21. Arunācalakkavirāyar's Kanyākumari Sthalapurāna contains the following statement :

அமமுனிவர்கள் சூதரிடம் சொன்னது.

"நீரருளிச் செய்த சிவபுராணம் பத்தினுள்ளொன்றாகிய காந்தமென்னும் புராணத்திலிருந்து சுசீந்திர ஸ்தல புராண மான்மியங் கூறினீர்".

22. The Samskrit Sthalapurāna is divided into 24 Sargas (chapters) ; the Malayālam Purāna also has 24 Sargas, while the Tamiḻ version presents 30. But, that does not indicate that the Tamiḻ Purāna contains additional matter ; only, some of the Sargas in the Samskrit Purāna have been subdivided and treated separately. For example, the Sarga dealing with Atri's going to Brahmalōka (*அத்திரி பிரம சபையிற்சென்ற சருககம்*) and that describing the glory of Anasūya's chastity (*அனசூயை கறபு மகிமைச சருக்கம்*) are found combined in one Sarga in the Samskrit Purāna. It is only in respect of minor details, that some slight variations between the Samskrit and the Tamiḻ versions are noticeable. For example, the Tamiḻ Purāna furnishes a more vivid description of the circumstances that led to Sūta's narration of the glory of Śucīndram; in connection with Indra's beautification of Śucīndram, the Tamiḻ version offers more details. It states that Indra performed 64 kinds of pūjās before organizing the Utsavas. Besides, it adds that Indra

The view that the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa could have appeared only about the 18th century does by no means imply that the entire body of legends embodied in the Sthalapurāṇa took shape so late as that. There is no doubt that the basic structure of the legends arose much earlier. Evidence of that is found in the change of names which appeared in respect of certain villages in the region.

Very illuminating is the consideration as to when and how the village of Tērūr, a mile to the north of Śucīndram, acquired its present name. Popular tradition, not to mention the Sthalapurāṇa itself, avers that it was the spot where Indra alighted from his car (Tēr), and that he stationed it there before proceeding to Śucīndram. Very probably, the legendary association of Indra with Śucīndram was responsible for the northern village acquiring the name Tērūr.

The village had an earlier name, Karumpaḻuvu, as is clearly learnt from several epigraphs.[23] Particularly, the inscription of 338 M.E. (1163 A.D), speaking about the Śrī Kailāsamuḍaiyār temple in Karumpaḻuvu, leaves no room for doubt regarding the identification of the place. The appellation 'Tēr,' seems to have been applied to Karumpaḻuvu for a time, but subsequently, it was tacked on to a high-sounding suffix, with the result that in the 12th and 13th centuries, the village was called 'Tērānaḻakiya Cōḻa Nallūr.'[24] Curiously enough, the three designations of the place are found co-existent in the epigraph of Sundaracōḻa Pāṇḍya as *'Tēr Karumpaḻuvūrāna Aḻakiya Cōḻa Nallūr'* However, the later records of 338 M.E. (1163 A.D.) and of 538 M.E. (1363 A.D) describe it only as 'Tērānaḻakiya Cōḻa Nallūr.' Obviously, the suffixes were products of the Cōḻa inventive genius for conferring new names.

But the question is, when exactly the name 'Tēr' became associated with the place for the first time. We have seen that the earlier epigraphs speak of the place as Karumpaḻuvu. Only the inscriptions ranging from the third year of Rājēndra (1015 A.D.) down to 338 M.E. (1163 A.D.), describe Tēr in conjunction with Karumpaḻuvu. These facts tend to suggest that it was about the 11th century A.D. that the appellation 'Tēr' became connected with the place for the first time. Hence, it may be

constructed houses for the 300 brahmins of the village. Apart from such additions to details here and there, the fundamental theme of all the three versions is identical Even so far as details go, the Malayālam Purāna is almost a word for word translation of the Samskrit original.

23. See T.A.S , VI, p. 182, line 1; Ibid. p 146, Ibid. p. 13
24. Rightly it is translated as Tēr, alias Aḻakiya Cōḻa Nallūr.

reasonably inferred that the association of the Indra legend with Śucīndram acquired a full-fledged form in or before the 11th century A.D.

'Tērūr' apart, the old name of Śucīndram itself, figuring as 'Śivindiram' in the early epigraphs, indicates that by the 9th century A.D., if not earlier, the legendary association of Indra with the place must have commenced. Śucīndram, as observed before, clearly denotes the place, where Indra was purified or absolved of his sin. The name Śucīndram itself was employed as early as the reign of Caḍayan Māṛan, in the 10th century A.D. Occasionally the older name Śivindiram recurs in the later epigraphs, too , but, by the time of Kulōttunga I, 'Śucīndram' becomes the commonly used name.

Śivindiram, perhaps, represented the locality where Śiva was worshipped or honoured by Indra. The suggestion that it denoted the region where Śiva's might or power was embodied *(Śivan + tiram)* seems far-fetched.[25] Likewise, the attempt to connect Śibi and Indra with the place does not appear justifiable for the simple reason that there is absolutely no evidence, inscriptional, or sculptural, supporting this view. On the whole, it seems to be beyond doubt that Śivindiram was a causal name, applied to the place by virtue of its legendary association with Śiva and Indra.

Thus, if the legendary basis had appeared as early as the 9th or 10th century, and if it came to be embodied in the Sthalapurāṇa only after the 15th century, probably in the 18th, then by all means, the original nucleus of the legend must have acquired all kinds of new additions and fresh embellishments, because, from generation to generation it was transmitted but by word of mouth. This is a further element of weakness affecting the credibility of the Purānic account.

Defects of the Purāṇic account : It is needless to say that even a superficial reader of the Purāṇa will be struck by its drawbacks. There appear several clear cases of anachronisms, contradictions and chronological inconsistencies. For example, the Aśvatha tree and the Trimūrti linga are stated to have sprung up later, in order to grant perpetual darśan to Atri and Anasūya. But, even in the earliest part of the Purāṇa, the existence of the sacred Aśvatha tree is found mentioned.[26] Besides, a

25 This suggestion has been made on the similarity of Vīrattānam. But, in respect of Śucīndram, why the 'ற' in the word (tiṛam) should have been changed into the soft consonant 'ர' it is difficult to explain.

26. See Sarga 3 of the Samskrit Purāna, where the Jñānāranya, resorted to by Atri and Anasūya, is described. The holy pipal (Aśvatha) tree in the form of Pranava is described even in that connection

glaring instance of an anachronism is the story connected with the purification of Indra. It figures in the Sthalapurāṇa immediately after the account of Śaṅkarācārya's advent to Śucīndram!

Chronological inconsistencies. Furthermore, Saṅkarācārya is stated to have witnessed the dance of Śiva in the Pūrṇajyōti Sabha, the hall to the north of the Trimūrti linga; the Tamil Purāṇa actually furnishes the more familiar name Cit Sabha to the hall situated north of Konṟayadi. Evidently, it is an attempt at ascribing a very early date to the Cit Sabha and trying to link it with the name of Śaṅkara. But, if the Cit Sabha had existed in the time of Śaṅkarācārya and if Indra's advent to Śucīndram took place afterwards, how is the mention about the construction of the temple itself by Indra reconcilable? Assuredly, the Cit Sabha could not have come into existence before the rise of the main temple. On the other hand, the available evidence indicates that the Cit Sabha is of recent origin. Above all, the implication that Indra's purification at Śucīndram occurred subsequent to the time of Śaṅkarācārya would defy the fundamental facts of known chronological order.

The Sthalapurāṇa would have us believe that the purification of Indra at Śucīndram occurred in the Kali Yuga, for it mentions positively that the ceremony took place in the hall erected in front of the Rāja Vṛkṣa (Konṟai tree). But, as observed earlier, the Sthalapurāṇa states that the sacred tree of the shrine became transformed into the Konṟai only in Kali Yuga. Moreover, in the Purāna, the advent of Paraśurāma, which is unmistakably ascribed to the Tretā Yuga, figures only subsequent to the account regarding Indra's redemption! Assuredly, it is by no means possible to hold that the Sthalapurāṇa does not profess to adhere to the chronological sequence.

Anachronisms apart, clear cases of irreconcilable conflicts of the Purāṇic version with hard facts are disclosed by inscriptions. Sarga 18 of the Samskrit Māhātmya states that once Indra came to Sucīndram, the place of his redemption, and worshipping Śiva, sang a hymn of praise on him. Indra then expressed his desire to reside there for ever and adore Sthāṇu. But Śiva allowed Indra to return to Heaven, adding however, that he may come for worship at Śucīndram every night. Thus it is clear that the tradition of Indra performing the Ardhayāma Pūjā in the Sthāṇunāthasvāmi temple has its basis in the Sthalapurāṇa. This tradition has gained a deep hold on popular belief, too. But, the epigraph of the 17th year of Māṟavarman Vīra Pāṇḍya at Śucīndram gives the lie direct to the credibility of that legend; for, the inscription re-

gisters an endowment to meet the expenses of the Ardhayāma (mid-night) Pūjā in the temple. Indeed, this affords a specific proof of the fantastic height to which legends can soar in utter disregard of real facts. If the inscription, referred to, belongs to the 14th century A.D., as it seems it does, very likely the particular legend about Indra performing the Ardhayāma Pūjā took shape much later, for, in case that tradition were current at the time the inscription was engraved, most certainly, such an endowment would not have been made.

Nor is this all. The sins of omission on the part of the Sthalapurāṇa are as inexplicable as its sins of commission. How does it happen that the Sthalamāhātmyam, which revels in a vivid description of the construction of the huge temple, tank, garden, streets, houses[27] etc , conspires to be absolutely silent about the great Viṣṇu shrine, the Tekkēdam of the pagoda ? Can it be that the pronounced Śaivite or Advaitic predilictions of the authors of the Purāna prompted them to pervert realities ? True, the numerous direct references to the Advaita faith in the body of the Purāṇa leave no room for doubt that the authors were strong upholders of the Advaitic persuasion.[28] But, the Purāṇa does mention other shrines of Viṣṇu outside Śucīndram like the Garudaksētra, the Madhusūdhanakṣētra, the Māyaksētra, all located near the place. Hence, it seems unwarranted to suggest that sectarianism was responsible for the omission of the 'Tentiruvēṅgada Emperumān' of the Śucīndram pagoda. Nevertheless, the omission remains an unaccountable mystery and a serious blot on the Purāṇa.

Common Legends · The Temple of 'Trimūrti Hills' : Perhaps, by far the most fundamental weakness of the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa, as indeed of Sthalapurānas as a class, is the repetition of legends associated with other temples. The basic structure of the legend embodied in the Śucīndram Purāṇa appears to be an adaptation of the stories connected with several other places of renown. At any rate, the same body of legends, with slight modifications, figures in the case of certain other temples as well. Almost a markedly similar legendary lore is associated

27. See Sarga XIV — Stanza 16 of the Tamil Purāna :
இட்டி நின்றதோர் விச்சை கன்றநி கேவெனை யானைமார்க்கு
விட்டி லகுபொ றுலைய பியறெனை விடுந்த நவைவானை
மட்டு யாநதகோ யிலைசெயநக் கோயிலினை மட்டி லுத் நாவாபி
தொட்டி வைநதநந் நனைனந் தோடுநந் சோலையுஞ் செய்நாளை

28 For example, Agastya is spoken of in Sarga 21 of the Samskṛit Purāna as अद्वैतचित्त : Describing the glory of Śucīndram and her temple, it is stated in Sarga 9 तुष्टुवु : प्रणवाकारमद्वैतं करुणानिधिम् In Sarga 10 Śankarācārya, on seeing the linga is said to have attained अद्वैतमुक्ति :

with the 'Trimūrti Hills' in the Munnār range of mountains in North Travancore.[29] The story runs thus: Atri and Anasūya are residing in Kāmadavanam in the neighbourhood of the Trimūrti Hills. Pārvati requests her lord to demonstrate to erring humanity the real merit and excellence of wifely chastity. Accordingly the Trimūrtis, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, disguising themselves as old mendicants, approach the Āśram of Atri. But here, as different from the Śucīndram Sthalapurāna account, it is stated that at the time of the arrival of the Trimūrtis, Atri is engaged in performing his ablutions, and that consequently, it is Anasūya who welcomes the guests. Moreover, unlike in the Śucīndram legend, the Dēvas do not impose the condition that Anasūya should be naked while serving them food, but they themselves are in a partial state of nudity when they approach Anasūya for alms. Faced by the two alternatives of either refusing food for the aged pilgrims or herself meeting the mendicants who are in a semi-nude state, she instinctively prays for their transformation into three babies, and her wish is fulfilled. Eventually the three goddesses, Sarasvati, Lakṣmi and Pārvati come down to Atri's Āśram in order to persuade Anasūya to release their lords from their trammels. Thus, it is seen that, despite certain variations, the basic legendary background of the temples of both Śucīndram and of Trimūrti Hills is the same. It is, however, very interesting to observe that the figures popularly believed to represent the Trimūrtis are really three Jain figures, in relief, seen on the eastern face of the rock.

The Anasūya Dēvi Temple, Garhvāl: Let us turn to another example. Far away in North India, amidst the snowy slopes of the Himālayas, in Garhvāl, there exists the Anasūya Dēvi Temple, which has gathered around it, a body of traditions, not very different from those described above.[30] This temple is stated to have flourished very near the Āśram of Atri and Anasūya. One day Nārada extols the glory of Anasūya's chastity in the assembly of the gods. The Trimūrtis, wishing to subject it to a test, come down disguised as three 'sādhūs' (pilgrims). Regarding the actual circumstances that lead to the transformation of the 'sādhūs' into babies, there is a variation both from the Śucīndram and 'Trimūrti Hills' versions. Here, it is Atri himself who welcomes and offers food to the mendicants. But they impose the stipulations that the food should be cooked in the hollow of a woman's

29. 'Trimūrti Purāna' (in Malayālam) pp. 1 to 43. See also the account in the Sunday Edition of the "Hindu", dated 22nd November 1942.

30. See the account in the Sunday Edition of the "Hindu", dated 14th March, 1943.

hand by the natural warmth of her body, and that, while cooking the food and serving it to them she should remain nude. Atri is utterly dismayed by these strange demands. Anasūya, however, overcomes the embarassing situation by sprinkling holy water on the pilgrims, accompanied by the chanting of mantrams; and, instantaneously, the sādhūs become transformed into children, five years of age, and thereafter, she fulfils every one of the conditions.

After a time, pining for their lords, and learning through Nārada about the mishap which has befallen the Trimūrtis, the three Dēvīs come down to Atri's Āśram. Unlike the other accounts mentioned above, this one represents the Dēvīs as scolding Anasūya for detaining their lords as children in her Āśram Anasūya is perfectly willing to allow them have the babies, but there arises the difficulty of identifying their respective lords, because the three children look alike. On further insistence by the Dēvīs, Anasūya sprinkles some holy water on the babies, and they are immediately re-transformed into the Trimūrtis.

Yet another difference noticeable in this account is regarding the boon that Atri and Anasūya received from the Trimūrtis. Here, Anasūya's prayer is that the same babies, for whom she has developed a warm affection, are to be born of her womb. Equally notable is the peculiar manner in which the prayer is granted A three-headed baby is born to her on the Mārgasīrṣ Pūrṇimā day, and the baby is named as 'Dattātrēya' or the three-headed God.

Several other temples in India present the legends of Atri and Anasūya, but the above-mentioned examples are sufficient to reveal that various shrines have adopted the basic structure of the legend with certain modifications in details. The variations are apparently ascribable to the fanciful flights of those who adapted the main body of the legend to their respective temples.

Indra's dominant role in the legendary lore of South India: Not only does the triumph of Anasūya's chastity form the legendary background of several temples, but even the accretion of Indra's association with the Śucīndram pagoda finds its parallel in many other temples. In fact, the Indra legend has had a surprisingly ubiquitous connection with numberless shrines of South India. Among the prominent temples the legends of which are associated with Indra, the following may be mentioned:— Tiruvaiyāṟu; Indranilaparuppadam; Kāraikkāḍu; Tirukkadambūr (near Mannārguḍi); Tirukkannārkōil in the village of Kurumaṇakkuḍi (near Vaittīśvarankōil); Kaṟuppaṟiyāḷūr (also near Vaittīś-

varankōil) Śarguṇanādēśvararkōil at Karuvili (near Kumbakōṇam), Tirukkaraivāśal; Kaiccinam (south-east of Tiruvārūr); Dēvūr (about 10 miles east of Nāgapaṭṭinam; Tiruparaitturai; Tirupputtūr (about 38 miles to the north-east of Madurai); Tiruppūndurutti (Tanjāvūr District); Tirumayēndrappaḷḷi (north-east of Koḷḷiḍam) Tirumalapāḍi; the famous Vṛiddācalam; Tentirumuttuvāyil; Tiruvākkarai; Vātpōkki near Maṇappāṟai; Tiruveṇkāḍu; Makaral (in Chingelput District); the celebrated Kālahasti and Tiruppuvanam (12 miles to the east of Madurai).

This long list shows how far the Indra legend had become incorporated with the traditions of South Indian temples. It must be, however, observed that there are variations in the details of the legendary lore. In the legends of certain temples, Indra figures as a pious visitor and as a devotee of Śiva; in others, he worships and expiates his sin; and, in still others, after adoring Śiva, Indra erects shrines for him.

Equally interesting is the association of the legends of Airāvada, the celebrated elephant of Indra, with several temples. In connection with Śucīndram, the Airāvada is believed to have gored the river Dantanadi or Kōṭṭāṟ from the adjoining hill in order to help Indra conduct his penance.[31] Further, as part of the folk-lore, there is in vogue the story connected with Indra, Airāvada and Vēda Vyāsa.

Legends about Airāvada: In the act of cleaving the hill, Airāvada exerts so much that it loses one of its tusks. Thoroughly exhausted, the elephant rests for a while under the pipal tree on the western bank of Prajñātīrtha. While lying there, casually he stretches his trunk, snatches and brings down one of the overhanging branches of the tree. At that time, Vēda Vyāsa happens to be absorbed in penance under the same pipal. By chance, a twig of the branch, dislodged by Airāvada falls on the sage. This disturbs him and rouses his fiery wrath. Down comes his curse that Airāvada is to be turned into a mass of stone.[32]

It is not a little surprising that almost similar stories of Airāvada have become associated with several temples. To mention a few examples. There flourishes the Airāvadēśvara temple at Dārāsuram near Māyavaram. The legend connected with it runs as follows:[33] When

31. Stanza 49—Sarga XII of the Tamiḻ Purāṇa.

32. A piece of rock is seen on the western bank of the Teppakkulam presenting roughly the shape of an elephant. People call it Ānaippāṟai, and it is held to represent the accursed Airāvada.

33. "Airāvadēśvara Sthalapurāṇa" (Tamiḻ); Tanjore Gazetteer pp 235-6; see also the Sunday Edition of the "Hindu", dated 24th January 1943.

Vēda Vyāsa is returning from Kailāsa after his worship of Śiva, Indra fails to treat him with the respect befitting the celebrated sage. Vyāsa offers flowers, which Indra, without descending from his Airāvada, receives; and, placing the bunch of flowers on his elephant, proceeds his way. Before a few steps are covered, the flowers fall down and happen to be trampled underfoot by Airāvada. Roused to fury, the quick-tempered Vyāsa curses Indra to be born a sinner (*Nīca*) and Airāvada an ordinary elephant on earth. Both Indra and Airāvada implore the mercy of the sage. Though revocation is refused, Vyāsa, however, commands Indra and the elephant to visit all the ancient Śiva shrines after their birth on earth, and assures them that Śiva would redeem and restore them to their former status in due course.

Accordingly after their advent to the mundane world, a tour of pilgrimage is undertaken and the belief is that, eventually at Tiruvārūr, the curse is redeemed. Airāvada settles down there, and every day, after a bath in the adjoining Kāveri, fills his trunk with the holy water and pours it on the linga of the shrine as abhiṣēkha. Pleased with the ardent piety of the animal devotee, Śiva restores Airāvada to its original position in the service of Indra. Incidentally Śiva grants redemption for Indra, too.

Several other South Indian temples present legendary associations with Airāvada. The temples of Śvētāraṇyēśvara of Tiruveṇkāḍu,[34] situated 7 miles to the south-east of Śīyāḻi, of Innambar near Kumbakōṇam, of Yetirkolpādi or Mālattirumananēri, a few miles away from Kuṟṟālam (Tanjāvūr District), of Tiruccāyakkādu, 9 miles south-east of Śīyāḻi, and above all of Airāvadēśvarar[35] in Tirukkōttāṟu, located three miles

34. "வெள்ளானை வேண்டும் வரங்கொடுப்பார் வெண்காடு மேவிய விகிர்தனாரே,"

— Tirunāvukkaraśai.

Dēvēndra also worshipped at the shrine:

"விண்ணவர்கோன வழிபட வெண்காடிடமா விரும்பினனே"

—Tirujñānasambandar.

35. Sambandar's hymn on it runs thus:

"நின்று மேய்ந்து நினைந்து மாகரி நீரொடும்மலர்வேண்டிவான் மழை
குனறி னேர்ந்து குத்திப் பணிசெய்யுங் கோட்டாற்றுள்
எனறும் மன்னிய எம்பிரான் கழலேத்திவானர சாளவல்லவர்
பொன்று மாறறியார் புகழார்ந்த புண்ணியரே"

Frequently, the question has been asked, why neither the Dēvāram hymnists nor the Āḻvārs have sung about 'Kōṭṭāṟu' and 'Śucīndram' of Nāñcināḍ. For one thing, it is not possible to be sure that the collections of the hymns available at present form the total body. Some might have been lost. Moreover, it must be

north-east of Tirunaḷḷāṟu Railway Station, are a few of the outstanding examples.

The emergence of the linga from amidst bamboos . Legends of Indra and of Airāvada are not the only factors common to Śucīndram and certain other temples of South India. What about the tradition connected with the emergence of the Śiva Linga from the cluster of bamboos, so firmly imbedded in the folklore and so vividly sculptured in the temple of Śucīndram ? Several others, too, present the same background. The temples of Tiruppaśūr, 3½ miles to the north of Kaḍambattūr, of Tiruppādi near Tiruppanandāḷ and of Nelvēlināthar in Tirunelvēli are some of the temples which bear the identical legend connecting the shepherdess, the spilling of milk, the cutting down of bamboos and the emergence of the linga.

Worship by the three great kings : This is not all. What about the alleged worship of the shrine by the celebrated 'Mūvēndar', the Cōḷa, Cēra and Pāṇḍya sovereigns ? It is the same story over again. Śucīndram presents it. Tiruppūvanam, just 12 miles to the east of Madurai, Tirumukkīccuram about a mile to the west of Tirucciräppaḷḷi and Kanyākumari, 8 miles to the south of Śucīndram itself, are other temples proud of the same fame.

What do these similarities in the legendary background of numerous shrines of South India indicate ? Repetitions of conventional statements and beliefs seem to have had a free play. The influence of literary convention, too, appears to have operated in shaping the thought of the poets who have embodied Purāṇic and legendary lore in their works.

Euhemerism : The consequent unreliability apart, the Sthalapurāṇas are often positively misleading to the student of history. Euhemerism or the practice of attributing to myths a historical basis is clearly discernible. Confining our attention to Śucīndram, we find that the accounts of the visits of the Mūvēndar, the Cēra, Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya sovereigns, the appearance of Śaṅkarācārya on the scene, and the mention of Hālāmṛta (the son of Aja born of a śūdra woman) ruling over

remembered that the main theatre of activities of the Śaiva hymnists was the interior of Tamil Nāḍ. Significant is the fact that among the 274 shrines on which the Śaiva Nāyanmār have sung, Tiruvañcaikkalam is the singular shrine in the whole of Malai Nād to secure this honour. True, among Vaisnava devotees, Nammāḻvār and Kulaśēkhara Āḻvār were associated with places like Tiruppatisāram and Tiruvaṭṭār. (Tiruppatisāram, three miles north-east of Śucīndram, is said to have been the birth-place of Nammāḻvār). But even they are not known to have sung about Śucīndram.

the place with the help of his sister's son, born of brahmin father, are all instances of Euhemerism.

Aetiology : More misleading and perplexing is the aetiological tendency on the part of the myth-makers. Aetiology is the assignment of causes in order to explain existing names and institutions, often, ingenious stories to suit the prevalent names are invented. Kōṭṭār, the ancient town, a couple of miles to the north-west of Śucīndram, affords a striking illustration. The Sthalapurāna, as observed earlier, states that since Airāvada gored the hill with its tusk *Kōṭṭam*, the river and the place on its bank were called Kōttāṛ.[36] But, it is well known that the name Kōṭṭāṛ was applied to the particular place in the days of the Early Pāṇḍya Kings. Even Ptolemy, writing about 150 A.D, speaks of Kōṭṭiaṛa, the Metropolis. Assuredly, as far as the dependable sources of information go, the Śucīndram temple is not known to have appeared at such an early date. The explanation is obvious. It is a case of roping in the name Kōṭṭāṛ to fit it into the legendary fold.

Mythological perversion of names · Not less striking is the ingenious device of the legend-monger of effecting mythological perversions of or bestowing new names on, old places. The name Āśrāmam, applied to the village immediately to the west of Śucīndram, furnishes a striking instance. Legend describes the place as the 'āśrama' or the abode of Atri and Anasūya. The name 'āśrama' would have been in popular parlance corrupted into Āśrāmam.[37] But the question arises as to when the name Āsrāmam itself was originally applied to the place. Though none of the inscriptions throws any light on the question, a comparatively modern record of the Śucīndram temple, seems to offer a clue. The accounts of the pagoda belonging to the year 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) mention the Kṛṣnasvāmy temple of Āśrāmam as that of Mahādānapuram. That record speaks of the same village itself as Āśrāmam in another connection. Most probably, the hamlet was originally described

36. Stanza 49 of Sarga XII of the Tamil Purāna:

கரியு மாங்கன் றீங்கிரு வரைத்தொழுக் கண்டுன்
னரிய கோட்டினால வருதலி னினியகோட் டாறென
றரிய நாமமும் பெறுகவிந் நதிபடிந் தூறவே
புரியு மன்பினோர் நினைத்தவா முடிகவெப் பொழுதும்

37. Several instances of an identical process of transformation may be cited. Tirumangai Āḻvār in his celebrated 'Periya Tirumoḻi' describes the deity of Bhadarikāśramam (Bhadrināth) as 'Vadariyāśramattuḷḷāṉē' (*வதரியாசிரமத்துள்ளானே*) Besides, both Sambandar and Sundaramūrti refer to the āśram covered with green leaves as 'Tiruppāccilācrāmam.'

as Mahādānapuram by virtue of its having been a brahmadēya; subsequently the change in name would have appeared. Local tradition accords with this suggestion. But, when exactly the new appellation was introduced, there is no means of knowing. Perhaps it may be conjectured, that the change appeared not much earlier than 1819 A.D., since both the old and the new names are found co-existent in the record of that year. Furthermore, legendary lore was responsible for inventing names to places, and linking them with Purānic stories. It is in this manner that the southern part of Malaya Hills assumed the name of Mahēndragiri. Similar is the case with Maruttuvāmalai, where Indra's penance is alleged to have taken place before entering Śucīndram. Maruttuvāmalai is apparently named after Indra himself, since Marut is one of his several appellations.[38]

Nor does it rest here. A smaller hillock found close to Maruttavamalai has acquired the distinctive Tamilian name 'Indran pottai.' Besides, a natural spring in the hill of Maruttuvāmalai is honoured with the designation of 'Indran Śunai'. Members of a caste of people, now known by the generic name of Veḷḷālas, were until recently known as 'Indravīra Veḷḷāḷas'.[39] Though local enquiry does not help us in learning the etymological significance of the term, it is obvious that it has a legendary association with Indra. 'Indra Vināyakar,' within the temple, has its own tale to tell; it is the image of Gaṇapati said to have been worshipped by Indra, prior to his purification.

On the whole, it seems that the names of places, of idols, of castes and of social ceremonies are ingeniously twisted and corrupted to suit fanciful derivations, under the influence of the same myth-making tendencies. In truth, to accept the Sthalamāhātmyas and folklore as faithful guides is to abandon all canons of historic criticism.

But when all is said, the fact remains that it is unfair to be hypercritical about the legendary lore of temples. It must be remembered that the legends were not developed or embodied in the Sthalapurāṇa

38. The later interpretation brought to bear upon the name of the hill is rather strange. It is supposed to represent the hillock of medicinal herbs (Maruntu + vāḻ + malai = மருந்து வாழ் மலை). The hillock is also believed to have formed a piece of the hill carried by Hanumān to Laṅka in the Tretā Yuga.

39. The record of the temple (994 M.E.) states thus:—

"പൊന്നും വെള്ളിയും ഏറെറാ എന്ന് ഇന്ദ്രവീര വെള്ളാളരോട്ടു മൂന്നു പ്രാവശ്യം ചോദിച്ച് കൊടിപ്പട്ടം വെളിയിൽ എഴുന്നെള്ളിയ്ക്കും."

with the object of presenting accurate history. It was, as part of a general tendency to exalt the divinity or sanctity of particular temples, that the Sthalapurāṇas were primarily composed. This feature must not be lost sight of, in attempting to evaluate them. After all, legends are legends and have to be judged as such and nothing more. Though a few scattered grains of historic truth may be gleaned out of them, their proper place is the 'realm of myths.' Perhaps, the mythologies sought to expound some philosophical truth, like the triumph of chastity or the efficacy of prayer. Be that as it may, the legends of the temple deserve to be studied and analysed, for, whatever the attitude of the modern historian towards them, it cannot be denied that the traditions embodied in the Sthalapurāṇa have been actively believed by myriads of people for centuries, and these beliefs have influenced their religious attitude and conduct in no small measure.[40]

40. "In India, Mythology is not a mere subject of antiquarian research and disquisition; here, it still permeates the whole life of the people as a controlling influence" Sister Nivedita and Anand Coomaraswamy: "Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists" (1913), p. 4.

C H A P T E R V

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Sources of information: Origins of hoary institutions are usually enshrouded in mystery. This disconcerting feature is particularly remarkable in respect of the ancient temples of South India. While direct evidence concerning their beginnings is scanty, popular traditions and the Sthalapurāṇa accounts are, more often than not, illusory in character. Inscriptions, which are by far the most reliable of the sources, unfortunately do not specify either the date or the manner of the origin of the Śucīndram temple. But there is one direction in which the epigraphs of the pagoda are of immense help; they enable us to determine the upper limit of its chronology. The earliest lithic records in Śucīndram belong to the 9th century A.D., even at the most conservative estimate.[1] An inscription of the 5th year of Māṛan Caḍayan, which is one of the early epigraphs found in the temple, speaks of Nṛipaśēkharavaḷanallūr, a neighbouring village, as a dēvadāna of the Emperumān of Śucīndram. This proves positively that the sacred shrine at Śucīndram was in existence in the time of Māṛan Caḍayan, the early Pāṇḍyan sovereign (c. 880-900 A.D.).

1. It is important to remember that several early epigraphs of the temple cannot now be deciphered. Some of them have become damaged and others are hidden from view, completely or partially, by later structures added to the temple. On palaeographic grounds, those portions which can be deciphered from the early epigraphs indicate that they belong to the 8th century A.D. A fragmentary inscription found inside the Maḍappaḷḷi is assignable even to the 7th century A.D.

Konṟayaḍināthа image : What was the earliest image or object of worship which formed the nucleus of the great temple ? That the principal shrine or the Mūlasthāna of the present Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple appeared later than the svayambhu (natural-born) linga, now represented by Konṟayadināthar, is the assertion of the Sthalapurāna. Local tradition is in perfect accord with that view. The differences in the architectural style of the shrines of Konṟayadināthar and Sthāṇunāthasvāmy serve to reinforce it. Finally, the known facts concerning the genesis of numberless South Indian temples support this hypothesis. The image of Konṟayadināthar, as the name indicates, is the one at the foot of the Konṟai which forms really the 'temple tree' or 'Ksētra Vṛksa'. Many a South Indian temple has had its sacred tree, and, it is believed, that the origins of those fanes are connected with the earlier adoration of the respective ksētra vṛkṣas.

Tree Worship : The evolution of the religious development of many other countries, too, reveals that tree worship was common in primitive ages.[2] Mrs. Stan Harding writes .[3] " Tree worship may well be the earliest form of sacred ritual and has its banyan roots among all the primitive races of the world. All ancient peoples seem to have worshipped some tree or other, as the haunt of spirits good or evil, as the abode of a demon or deity, or as the beloved of some God, who must be worshipped with its leaves, flowers, fruits or branches. The gods of ancient Greece had each a tree of his own; so had the goddesses. To Zeus belongs the oak, to Apollo the laurel, to Dionysius the vine, to Hera the willow, to Aphrodite the myrtle and to Athene the olive " Concerning this world-wide practice, Prof. Monier Williams, too, rightly observes that "the adoration of trees, shrubs and plants, in virtue of the supernatural qualities of divine essence supposed to be inherent in them, is almost as universally diffused over the globe as the worship of animals", and that both forms of religion are of the greatest antiquity."[1]

In numerous holy places of South India, the sacred tree formed the early object of worship. It became the nucleus around which sprang a temple, in the course of time.[5] In some instances, it was not a single

2. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII, p. 449
3. "Times of India" of 24th November 1935, p. 18
4. See "Religious Thoughts and Life in India" pp 326-329.
5 It is not contended that this was the only manner of rise of temples, but, undoubtedly, this was a common mode The tendency on the part of scholars like Mr Longhurst or Dr Venkataramanayya to trace the origins of Hindu fanes in South India to one source and to that only, seems unacceptable.

tree but a group of trees which constituted the basic nucleus. The fact that in Malabār, the ancient fanes are called kāvus, which mean etymologically nothing but groves, is a pointer in that direction. Further, the names of several old temples of South India, like Tiruvānaikkā, Tirukkōlakkā, Tirukkōḍikkā and Tirunellikkā are suggestive of their origin.[6] Certain others seem to have been located either in forests or amidst clusters of trees. 'Tillai Ambalam', the original name of the celebrated Cidambaram, reveals that the temple was situated in a place surrounded by Tillai trees. The names of numberless South Indian shrines bear unmistakable testimony to their association with trees or forests, for instance, Tiruveṇkādu, Talai Ālaṅgāḍu, Tiru Ālaṅgāḍu, Kāraikkāḍu, Māraikkāḍu, Tiruvērkāḍu, Koḷḷikkāḍu, Śāyakkāḍu, Talaicceṅgāḍu, Kaḍambavanam (Madurai), Matuvanam (Nannilam), Vilvavanam (Tiruvadanai), Vēṇuvanam (Tirunelvēli), Campakavanam (Tirunāgēśvaram), Makiḻavanam (Tirunīdūr) and a host of other names like Vamśāraṇyam (Tiruppaśūr), Badarikāraṇyam (Tiruvenpākkam), Naimiśāraṇyam (Tiruvirkōlam) and Vikṣāraṇyam (Tiruvevvuḷūr).[7]

In the light of the examples mentioned above, it is not surprising that the origins of the Śucīndram temple are associated with a forest in general and the Konṟai tree, in particular. The Sthalapurāṇa describes the region of Śucīndram as Jñānakānana and Santānakānana. Besides, it speaks of the emergence of the Aśvatha tree (which became transformed into the Konṟai in the Kaliyuga) as having sprung up along with the Trimūrti linga at divine command.[8] The existence of the vestige of the huge Konṟai and of the Konṟayaḍināthar shrine at its foot lends colour to the legendary version. Even after the main temple arose, down to the present day, the Konṟai tree has been adored by visitors to the pagoda. The sanctity attached to the tree explains its maintenance even after the principal shrine was constructed. It is a similar circumstance which accounts for the preservation of the trunk of a Kaḍamba tree with great care in the Kaḍambavana Kṣētra of Madurai or of the Kuṟumbilā tree in the pagoda at Kuṟṟālam.

6. Like 'Kāvu' in Malayālam, 'Kā' in Tamiḻ, literally means a grove or tree. The Samskrit Texts also prescribe this feature. "The gods always play where groves are near, in the neighbourhood of rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with pleasure gardens" ('Brhat Samhita',—V. 4-8; Bhaviṣya Purāna, I. CXXX, 11-15).

7. 'Kādu', 'Vanam' and 'Āranyam' are all synonyms of forest

8. The Konṟai has been traditionally associated with Śiva; but the tree held most sacred for him is the Aśvatha. Perhaps, that accounts for the Sthalapurāṇa describing the original tree that arose in Krita Yuga as the Aśvatha, which is claimed to have been transformed through various phases into the Konṟai of the present.

However, attempts at estimating the age of the Konṟai tree, and thus, of the Trimūrti linga at Śucīndram have not led to any conclusive results. A local writer, Chidambarakurralam Pillay, claims that Gopinatha Rao had shown that the tree is over two thousand years old. He adds that Gopinatha Rao had sent a part of a branch of the Konṟai and had it examined by experts in Calcutta and London, who concluded that the tree should have flourished at least two milleniums ago. But, unfortunately, Chidambarakurralam Pillay has not indicated the name of the Journal in which Gopinatha Rao is stated to have recorded this fact.[9]

It is indisputable that the Konṟai tree is very old. On the whole, there is nothing to disprove the suggestion that the tree and the linga beneath it formed the nucleus around which the temple arose. But the Konṟayadināthar shrine, as we find it at present, was constructed later. An inscription on a pillar near the entrance to the shrine records that the construction was undertaken by one Andaramuranāyakakkuṭṭy. The archaeologist who has published this inscription assigns it to the 12th century A D.[10]

Kailāsattu Mahādēva shrine · Assuming that the Konṟai tree and the lingas at its foot formed the early objects of worship, what was chronologically the next image or shrine that arose in Śucīndram ? In all probability, the shrine of Kailāsattu Mahādēva (G P. No. 8) was the next to appear. The grounds for this view may be stated as follows. In the first place, all the early inscriptions of the temple are found engraved on the natural rock, at the top of which stands the shrine of Kailāsanāthar. Secondly, the earliest names of the deity figuring in the epigraphs of the place are Mahādēva and Emperumān. True, these are general appellations of Śiva, and could be applied to the principal deity (Vaḍakkēdam) of the present temple as much as to Kaliāsanāthar. But, invariably, the former is described in the epigraphs as 'Paramēśvara', 'Śucīndramuḍaiya Paramasvāmi', 'Udaiyār Śivindiramuḍaiya Nainār' and 'Sthāṇumālayapperumāḷ'. The appellation, 'Mahādēva', on the other hand, has persisted through the ages, to denote the deity over the Kailāsa rock. Thirdly, the Kailāsanātha image is found on the top of a rock and consequently on a higher altitude than that of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy. Besides, the former faces west, while the latter, situated almost on the same horizontal line, faces east. These are considerations strongly suggestive of an earlier origin of the Kailāsattu Mahādēva shrine. Undoubtedly, after the prin-

9 Chidambarakurralam Pillay: "Śucindai Mānmiyam" (Tamil), p. 12.
10. T.A.S., VIII, p. 3.

cipal temple of Sthānunāthasvāmy was constructed, the establishment of another shrine on the same horizontal line but facing the opposite direction seems unnatural. The circumstance that the Kailāsa temple is situated on a higher altitude than the main temple tends to confirm the earlier origin of the former. Lastly, the image on the Kailāsa rock, as well as the doorway and the pillars of the garbagrha of the Kailāsattu Mahādēva shrine, present an age-worn appearance, and are not ascribable to a period later than the 10th century A D.

It is true that the earliest inscription on the granite wall enclosing the Kailāsa shrine belongs to so late a date as 1246 A.D. But this wall, as indeed the entire structure of the Maṇdapa in front of the garbhagrha of the Kailāsa shrine, appears to have been either renovated at a later stage or constructed for the first time, long after the rise of the shrine itself. That the Mandapa was constructed later may be inferred from two circumstances. One is that the pillars within the Maṇdapa present the Nāgabandham ornament, a feature uncommon before the 12th century A.D.[11] Another is that the southern wall of the Maṇdapa has been built over the Vaṭṭeḻuttu inscription of the 8th year of 'Cōḻan talaikoṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya.' Thus, though the shrine of Kailāsattu Mahādēva arose early, the Maṇdapa in front of it must have been constructed in the form we find it at present, at a later date, probably some time between the end of the 10th and the middle of the 13th century A.D.

Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ: It is interesting to find that a Viṣṇu image existed in the temple as early as the 9th century A.D The epigraph of Māṛan Cadayan (Regnal year 2 + 3 Mithuna) refers to endowments of a golden crown and ornaments to Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ. The latter, described now as Pallikoṇdaperumāḷ, by reason of the śayana pose represented by the image, is at present found in the south-west corner of the first prākāra, behind the Tekkēḍam shrine. It is true that the pillared porch, encircling the first prākāra, appears to have been a later construction, probably of the 12th century A.D. An inscription of 1126 A.D. is found engraved on the outer wall of the first prākāra. Perhaps, the present structure of the first prākāra was constructed in the 12th century itself. At the beginning, there might have existed a temporary structure enshrining the image of Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ, and probably it was demolished when the new corridor, constituting the first prākāra, was constructed.

Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam: While there is epigraphic evidence to show that by the last quarter of the 9th century A.D., there existed

11 J. Dubreuil: 'Dravidian Architecture', p. 42.

the image of Amarabhujaṅgaperumāl in the temple, by the middle of the 10th century A.D., certainly before 947 A.D., there must have arisen the shrines of Vadakkēdam and Tekkēdam. This is clear from the inscription of Parakēsari Varman Parāntaka I, bearing his 40th regnal year, which speaks of a gift of lamp for Emperumān and another for Tiruvēngadanilai Undoubtedly, the latter refers to the present Viṣṇu shrine known as 'Tekkēḍam' and the former to the shrine of Sthāṇumālaya known as 'Vaḍakkēdam'.[12]

In this connection, it must be mentioned that the identification of Emperumān made by Dr. Hultzch seems unacceptable. Dr. Hultzch, editing some of the early inscriptions of Śucīndram,[13] held that the appellation 'Emperumān' which appears in those records denoted Viṣṇu. Evidently, the basis for his inference was the fact that commonly Viṣṇu is described also as Perumāl. But 'Emperumān', signifying 'the great deity', independent of the particular persuasion, is used, as known to students of Tamiḻ literature, to denote Śiva as well as Viṣnu. That Dr. Hultzch's view is inapplicable, at any rate with reference to the Śucīndram epigraphs, is seen from the inscription of the 10th year of Rājarāja in the same temple, where 'Emperumān' and 'Mahādēva' are employed in an identical sense.[14]

Let us return to the history of 'Vaḍakkēḍam' and 'Tekkēdam'. The question arises, why a separate shrine of Viṣnu was erected while there was already the Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ image of Viṣṇu. It must be observed that the place where the latter image was stationed became an out-of-the-way spot after the rise of 'Vaḍakkēḍam'. Perhaps, the need for having a Viṣnu shrine by the side of Vadakkēḍam, occupying a deservedly prominent place, explains the rise of Tekkēdam presenting the image of Viṣṇu in the standing pose. After the middle of the 10th century A.D., the shrine of Tekkēḍam assumed an importance second only to that of Vaḍakkēḍam, and the image of Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ was relegated to an insignificant position. Not even a single inscription, subsequent to that of Māṛan Cadayan, makes a reference to this deity. Nor

12 The decorative Kumbha at the top of the Śikhara over the Vadakkēdam garbhagṛha was plated with gold by one Piccammai Kuttiyammai of Tiruvattār on 28th Alpaśi, 757 M.E. (1581 A.D.) (See Appendix — Inscription, No. 71). Thus this embellishment was provided far later.

13. E. I, Vol V, pp. 42 ff.

14 T.A.S, I, pp. 238-239. It states that Maḻavarāyan . . . . gave to the temple of Mahādēva at Tiruccivīndiram one lamp and the Sabha made it over to Padaittaruman Kanaiyan of Vēttikkudi of Emperumān. Clearly, Emperumān, here denotes merely the great God, and is used as a synonym of Mahādēva.

is any further endowment recorded specifically for Amarabhujaṅga-perumāḷ.

Such a relegation to the background of an earlier image is not altogether unknown in South Indian temples. For instance, almost a similar development appears to have occurred in the famous Viṣṇu temple at Tiruvallikkēṇi in Madras It is believed that the original shrine in that temple was that of Raṅganātha in the śayana pose. It was later, either in the time of Pallavamalla or of Dantivarman Pallava that the image of Pārtasārathi seems to have been set up.[15] A probable evidence of that is found in the fact that, even at present, the Tirukkalyāṇam (sacred marriage) in the temple is celebrated for Raṅganātha and Vēdavalli, his consort. In support of this view, a negative piece of testimony, too, may be adduced. All the early Āḻvārs (Vaiṣṇava saints), Poikai, Pēy and Bhūtattu Āḻvār refer to only Raṅganātha in the temple and not to Pārtasārathi. On the other hand, later, Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār states that the Pārtasārathi temple was founded by a Toṇḍaiyār (Pallava) king.

Thus, as observed earlier, Tiruvēṅgaḍanilai became the prominent Viṣṇu shrine in the Śucīndram temple in or before 947 A.D. Thereafter, several epigraphs like those of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Cōḷa Pāṇḍya and of Kōda Kēraḷavarman speak of endowments to Tiruvēṅgaḍattāḻvār.[16] That this apparently new-fangled name is a common appellation of Viṣṇu is learnt from South Indian inscriptions and literature. It is well known that Vēṅgaḍam is another name of Tirupati, a place sacred to Viṣṇu.

However, the designations 'Ten-tiruvēṅgaḍam' and 'Vada-tiruvēṅgaḍam' occurring in the Śucīndram epigraphs are intriguing. It would be perfectly understandable if the Viṣṇu shrine of Śucīndram were described as 'Ten-tiruvēṅgaḍam' in relation to Tirupati, the northern 'Tiruvēṅgaḍam' of fame. But, the name 'Vaḍatiruvēṅgaḍam', applied to

15 E I, Vol. VIII, pp. 290 ff; I M.P., Vol. II, pp. 988-9; and '*Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*' (1939), p. 356. Some of the local residents think that the image of Narasimhamūrti in the temple is the oldest, while a few others assign the priority to the image of Pārtasārathi itself. On the whole, the epigraphic and literary testimony support the view that Pārtasārathi is of later origin.

16. T.A.S., VI, p. 3. A.S. Ramanatha Aiyar's statement, that the name 'Ten-tiruvēngadam' was probably introduced for the first time by the Cōla soldiers of Kulōttunga's nilappadai at Kōttār or by the followers of Cōla Pāṇdya Viceroys, is not accurate: The occurrence of Tiruvēngadanilai in the epigraph of Parāntaka in Śucīndram disproves the view that the importation of the name took place so late as the 11th century A D.

a shrine in Śucīndram itself,[17] suggests that the above explanation does not hold water. Situated about 200 yards north of the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple, is found the Dvārakai Emperumān shrine It is quite likely that the latter fane was then described as that of Vadatiruvēṅgadattāḻvār. If so, the Visṇu shrine of Tekkēḍam was, in relation to that, described as 'Tentiruvēṅgadam'.

In spite of the fact that the inscriptions frequently refer to the 'Tiruvēṅgadattāḻvār' and the Dvārakai Emperumān shrine, it is surprising that the Sthalapurāna has conspired to be absolutely silent about these different Viṣṇu fanes. The explanation for this omission is to be found in the fact that the Sthalapurāna was concerned only with the rise of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple, and its all-absorbing attention to the latter has, apparently, precluded other shrines of Śucīndram finding a place in it. On the face of it, the absence of any reference to the Tekkēḍam Perumāl shrine may suggest that it arose subsequent to the appearance of the Sthalapurāna. This is definitely disproved not only by the inscription of Parāntaka, noted above, but also by the epigraph of Rājēndra Cōla on the base of the western outer wall of its garbhagrha. The date of this inscription, as seen from '*Yānḍiru*' occurring in it, appears to range during the twenties of the reign of Rājēndra; it must have belonged to some year between 1032 and 1041 A.D.

This proves indubitably that the present structure of Tēkkēdam arose before the middle of the 11th century A.D. Equally indisputable is the fact that it had appeared before 947 A.D. That leads to the inference that the Vadakkēdam Garbhagrha must have come up anterior to it; for, its architectural style points to a still earlier period than the date of the origin of Tekkēdam[18] A confirmation of the fact that the Vaḍakkēḍam shrine was constructed before the 11th century is furnished by an inscription of 1102 A.D.[19] It records that the image of the goddess of Śucīndravādi was set up in the temple by one Pūvaṇavaṉ Kāri. The goddess specified in the epigraph is none other than the bronze image of Umayammai, found on the same pedestal holding Śucīndaperumāl in the pose of Umāmahēśvara. The inscription clearly states that the donor set up the image of the goddess of Śucīndravādi (*Śucīndiravādikku ttalainikaḻ mātai ccamaittān*). Significant is the fact, that on occasions of the Utsavas, it is this image which is taken in procession as Pārvati. Besides, in connection with the ceremony of Tiruk-

17. Inscription of Kōda Kēralavarman—T.A S., IV, p 21
18. See Chapter XI
19. T.A.S., IV, p 130

kalyāṇam, as well as on Tiruvātirai, the tenth day of the Utsava, when the goddess has to be separately taken out in procession, it is this image that serves to play the role of Pārvati. Obviously, the '*talaimikal mātu*', of Śucīndravēdi is nothing but this image Thus the inference that Vaḍakkēdam had arisen before 1102 A.D. is strengthened.

Śucīndaperumāl. But there is no means of knowing the place where the image of Umayammai was originally established. It may be conjectured that, in the beginning, it was housed in the garbhagrha of Vaḍakkēdam. Later, probably when the Utsavas of the temple necessitated the taking out of the goddess in procession, it was removed to its present abode, on the pedestal bearing the Śucīndaperumāḷ. As far as our present knowledge goes, the group of images now described as Śucīndaperumāḷ was not set up before 1126 A.D. "*Umāskanda-sahitam Tirumēni*" mentioned in the epigraph of 1126 A D. (known in other temples as 'Sōmaskanda') seems to have been none other than the one now known as 'Śucīndaperumāḷ' enshrined in the first prākāra That this is one of the oldest groups of images in the temple is perfectly certain. But it is not known what happened to the image of Skanda which must have been included in the group constituting '*Umāskanda-sahitam Tirumēni*'. Probably, the small image of Subrahmaṇia, now found in the Sabhāpati shrine, by the side of the standing figure of Gaṇēśa,[20] is identical with the Skanda in question. In support of this identification, it may be mentioned that no separate oblations or pūjā are offered for that image of Subrahmaṇia, while for that of Gaṇēśa immediately to its left, these are performed most punctiliously every day. It is not unlikely that, when the celebration of the annual Utsavas became a regular feature and when the image of Sōmaskandamūrti was employed as the principal Utsava Vigraha, that of Skanda was removed to its present habitat.

Another circumstance in support of the identification of Śucīndaperumāḷ with '*Umāskanda-sahitam tirumēni*' is that the earliest epigraph on the outer wall of the first prākāra is that which records the establishment of the latter image. It is significant that the Śucīndaperumāḷ shrine is located in a structure jutting out from the western wing of the first prākāra. Undoubtedly, this shrine of Śucīndaperumāḷ must have been constructed earlier than 1128 A.D. Yet another feature which lends support to the identification of Śucīndaperumāḷ with the '*Umāskanda-sahitam Tirumēni*', set up in 1126 A.D., is that, in early

20. See Chapter XIII

times, it was the practice to have the image of Sōmaskandamūrti sculptured on the wall of the garbhagṛha, behind the linga, of the main Śiva shrine. That, in Pallava times this feature was commonly adopted, is testified to by Dubreuil.[21] He says: "The image of Śōmaskanda is the great master-designer of Pallava iconography......It seems that it represents the essential part of Pallava Śaivism about 700 A.D., for the image is usually found in front of the lingam, on the wall which forms the back of the sanctuary" It would appear that the stationing of the image on a separate shrine behind the garbhagṛha of the main temple was a later development of the Pallava design.

The Advent of the Malayāḷi Brahmins. The question of identifying the image of Sōmaskanda apart, its establishment is of singular interest in the history of the Śucīndram temple; because, the author of this benefaction appears to have belonged to the class of Malayāḷi brahmins, who figure now, probably for the first time on the scene. The donor was Araṅgan Trivikrama of Śīvallamaṅgalam. A native of Śīvallamaṅgalam became later one of the Yōgakkār of the temple. Was Araṅgan Trivikrama an ancestor of the later Yōgakkāran of that family? Very probably he was. The name of the donor, and particularly, the name of his native village, suggest that he was a Pōṟṟi or a Malayāḷi brahmin and a predecessor of one of the Yōgakkār. Therefore, it seems clear that about the year 1126 A.D. the new element, comprising the Malayāḷi brahmins, appeared in Śucīndram. As observed earlier, very likely it was under the patronage of Vīra Kēraḷa, the Vēṇāḍ ruler (1117 to 1144 A.D.), that the Pōṟṟis were brought into association with the temple. In due course, they acquired a leading position; by 1229 A.D., they virtually became the owner-managers of the temple.

Resuming the consideration of the temple's history, we find that before the first quarter of the 12th century A.D., almost all the shrines enclosed within the first prākāra had come into existence. The image of Amarabhujaṅgaperumāl had appeared earlier than the 9th century A.D. The shrines of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam had arisen before 947 A.D. The bronze image of Umayammai, now fixed to the pedestal holding Śucīndaperumāḷ, had appeared by 1102 A.D. Finally, Śucīndaperumāḷ which seems identical with *'Umāskanda-sahitam Tirumēni'* of the inscription of 301 M.E., was enshrined in 1126 A.D.

Brahmarūpa Vināyakar: What about the images of Durga, Brahmarūpa Vināyakar and Śaṅkaranārayaṇa, all the three of which, are

21. J. Dubreuil: 'Iconography of South India'., p. 34.

found enshrined in small enclosures attached to the northern wall of Tekkēdam ? Were they established along with the shrine of Tekkēdam ? The epigraphs do not enlighten us on the question. But, the shrine of Vināyakar seems to be old ; perhaps, it belongs to as early a period as the 10th century A.D. The fact that the image is described as Brahmarūpa Vināyakar, representing Brahmā, suggests that, when the shrines of Śiva and Visṇu were constructed, the other deity of the Triad was enshrined in between the two.[22] The image of Vināyaka is considerably worn out by age, and appears to have been established at a very early period. Another piece of evidence, indirect though, suggests that this image of Vināyaka belongs to a period anterior to the 12th century A.D. No mouse or vāhana of Gaṇapati figures in front of the image. In this connection, it is important to remember that the images before the 12th century did not present their vāhanas or vehicles along with them.[23]

Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa : While the shrine of Brahmarūpa Vināyakar seems to be of early origin, it is impossible to ascertain the age of the other two. The accounts of 906 M.E. (1731 A D.) mention the shrines of Durga and of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa ; but, beyond doubt, they were constructed earlier than that date. An inscription of 805 M.E. (1629 A.D.) speaks of the endowment of a lamp by Mullamaṅgalam, in front of the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa image. Did the shrine of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa appear about that time ? Perhaps so. All that can be said for certain is that it arose in or before 1629 A.D.

It is equally difficult to determine the date of the Durga shrine, located to the north of Tekkēḍam. No record on stone or palm-leaf makes any reference to its origin. If the iconographic basis of inference is examined, the indication is that it belongs to a period considerably later than the 12th century A.D. Apart from the fact that the image does not seem to be half as age-worn as that of Brahmarūpa Vināyakar, the pose of the figure and the drapery of the garment suggest a late date. In fact, Durga in this shrine is not iconographically different from the Jayantīśvarattu Durga. There is epigraphic evidence that the last-mentioned image was established in 1593 A.D. Perhaps, the shrine of Durga, situated between Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam, appeared about the 16th century A.D.

22. That shrines dedicated to Brahmā are not to be constructed is an old maxim. The Purānic account is that in connection with the appearance of Liṅgōdbhavamūrti, Brahmā had uttered a falsehood and hence this curse. Temples dedicated to Brahmā assume other forms, as for example, that of Brahmarūpa Vināyakar.

23. J. Dubreuil : 'Iconography of South India', p 43.

Another inscription states that on the 4th Mārkaḻi in 796 M.E. (1621 A.D.) one Nāgammai of Tērūr set up a lamp to the north of Tekkēḍam and made an endowment for its maintenance. It is important to remember that the Durga shrine is located immediately to the north of Tekkēḍam. Unfortunately, the cryptic epigraph tells us little else. However, since the Brahmavināyakar shrine had appeared much earlier, perhaps, this gift of the lamp was made in 1621 A.D. for the shrine of Durga. The fact that the donor was a woman strengthens this probability. It is not unlikely that the benefaction itself was made soon after the construction of the shrine of Durga. In the absence of information to the contrary, the above-mentioned inference may be postulated tentatively.

The Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa: Resuming the survey of the development of the main temple, we find that new structures appeared as the years rolled on. If the main shrine of Vadakkēḍam had arisen by 947 A.D., the Ṛsabha Mandapa, just in front of Vadakkēḍam, may have come into being either about the same time or within a couple of centuries after that, at the latest. This piece of inference is warranted by the inscription of Māṛavarman Śrīvallabha, the Paṇḍyan king, who bestowed a gift of land on Kūttāḍumdēvar and his consort. Doubtless, the reference in the inscription is to the bronze image of Naṭarāja or Sabhāpati enshrined in the Ṛsabha Maṇḍapa, to the north-east of Vaḍakkēḍam. This epigraph belongs to a date about the middle of the 12th century A.D., and therefore, the shrine of Natarāja arose during, or before, that period. It follows that the Ṛṣabha Maṇdapa should have existed prior to that time, for the Naṭarāja shrine is part and parcel of this pavilion. But the Vāhanappura inscription of 413 M.E. states that the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa, which was formerly a wooden structure, was then re-constructed of stone.[24] Therefore, the Ṛsabha Maṇḍapa, as a wooden structure, came into existence before or during the 12th century A.D., while in its present form, it appeared in 1238 A.D.

Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa: Regarding the date of the construction of the porch (Udaya Mārtāṇda Maṇḍapa) stretching to the east of the Ṛṣabha Manḍapa, the Vāhanappura inscription of 413 M.E. throws light. The epigraph states that the Vēṇād ruler who effected this improvement to the temple in 413 M.E. was Śrī Vīra Udaya Mārtāṇḍavarman. Evidently the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa was called after this king, and thus, it is clear that this porch, too, was constructed in its existing form in 413 M.E. (1238 A.D.).

24. Appendix—Inscription, No. 51.

An intriguing question arises as to when the huge hall in front of Tekkēḍam (corresponding to the Ṛṣabha and Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapas of Vaḍakkēḍam) was erected. It does not seem likely that, while the extension eastward was progressing in front of Vaḍakkēḍam, the corresponding space opposite Tekkēḍam was left as an open courtyard. Very probably, Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma not only constructed the hall immediately to the east of the Ṛsabha Maṇḍapa but also the extensive porch in front of the Garbhagṛha of Tekkēḍam. The following facts may be adduced in support of that view.

In the first place, the height of the Maṇdapas seen both in front of Tekkēḍam and Vaḍakkēḍam is exactly the same. More striking is the uniformity of architectural style adopted in the construction of these Maṇḍapas. The unity of plan in respect of these structures is obvious even to the casual observer. Only a wall in the middle, running east to west, separates the Maṇḍapa in front of Tekkēḍam from the corresponding ones in front of Vaḍakkēdam. However, it may be argued that a later Maṇḍapa could have been built so as to bring it into line with the earlier structure. But, while a later construction might have conformed to the height of the original Maṇdapa, it is not probable that exactly similar details would have been repeated, if these porches were built at different dates and by different patrons. Moreover, since the Tekkēḍam Maṇḍapa, too, should have certainly come into existence before the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa was erected, Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma of the 12th century A.D. was, in all probability, the architect of that structure, too.

It is important to remember that, in front of Tekkēḍam, a porch, exactly corresponding to the Ṛṣabha Manḍapa does not seem to have been built at all. If such a structure had appeared, it would be found there, clearly distinguishable from the Tekkēḍam Maṇḍapa. As it is, what exists in front of the Tekkēḍam Garbhagṛha is a single extensive porch. Evidently, by 1141 A.D., the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa alone had been constructed, without any corresponding structure in front of Tekkēḍam. That accounts for the circumstance that the Tekkēḍam Maṇḍapa is one long porch corresponding to the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa and the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa together, facing Vaḍakkēḍam.

It may be asked why the Vaḍakkēḍam porch alone continues to be called after Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma if he were the author of the Maṇḍapas in front of both Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam. The answer is that, to start with, the name was commonly used for both the Maṇḍapas,

but in later times, because of the greater importance paid to the Śiva shrine, the hall in front of the latter alone continued to be called after the author. Moreover, the Tekkēḍam porch is popularly known as Namaskāra Mandapa, because the brahmins who are appointed to prostrate before the deity at the time of the mid-day pūjā, perform their Namaskāram (prostration) there. This later designation of the porch must have eclipsed the older name.

Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil · The earliest of the shrines which arose outside the main temple was that of Subrahmaṇia. An inscription on the western façade of the shrine records its rise in 413 M.E. (1238 A.D). The name of the person who set up the image is perhaps mentioned in the inscription; but that particular portion is defaced and cannot be made out. Nor can the name of the shrine be learnt from the epigraph. However, the place where the inscription is engraved and the mention of the establishment of an image (*pratiṭṭiccadu*) occurring in it, leave no room for doubt that the record registers the rise of the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil. Fortunately, the inscription of 413 M.E., in the Vāhanappura furnishes a more specific information. It states that on 5th Mēḍa of 413 M.E. (1238 A.D.) one Kandiyūr Uṇṇi[25] constructed the shrine of Subrahmaṇia and made an endowment of property towards the expenses of the daily offerings.

The porch in front of the Subrahmaniasvāmy Kōil, the Iḷayanayinār Maṇḍapa, as it was called, was constructed only in the 16th century A.D. An inscription on one of the pillars of the Maṇḍapa reveals that, on 20th Kārtikai 759 M.E. (1584 A.D.) Sītammā, a Dēvaraḍiyāḷ who was attached to the Mahādēva temple in Kēraḷapuram, effected this construction. The two sculptured feminine figures, found on either side of the western extremity of the porch, apparently, represent the lady who provided the benefaction and her mother Mālaikkuṭṭy.

Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa: For nearly two centuries after the construction of the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇdapa, there does not seem to have occurred any structural addition to the main temple. The Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa, the narrow porch lying in front of the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa and Namaskāra Maṇḍapas, was the next to appear. That this porch was erected by or in honour of a Vīra Pāṇḍya is obvious from its

25. The inscription records also the reconstruction of several parts of the temple undertaken by a Vēnād ruler, probably Śrī Vīra Ravi Kērala Varma. Kandiyūr Unni was perhaps the queen of this monarch. Unni, Unnimā, Uṇṇimāyā, Uṇṇinangā and Unninīli were names common among Malayāḷi women in the past.

name. But it is difficult to determine the identity of the Vīra Pāndya whose name is associated with it. No epigraph is available which specifies the erection of this Maṇḍapa. However, a gift for the conduct of a Vīra Pāndyan Sandhi is recorded in an inscription.[26] In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it may be reasonably suggested that the same person who instituted the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Sandhi in the temple was the author of this benefaction as well. If so, the porch must have been erected some time in the middle of the 14th century A.D., very likely about 1351 A.D., which is the probable date of the inscription recording the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Sandhi.

This suggestion tallies with the known facts of Pāṇḍyan history. There are half a dozen rulers bearing the name, Vīra Pāṇḍya. But among these, neither the two Vīra Pāṇḍyas before the 12th century A.D. nor the Vīra Pāṇḍya who ruled about the middle of the 12th century A.D., could have been connected with the construction of this porch, for the Udayamārtaṇḍa Maṇḍapa appeared only by the end of the 12th century A.D., and it is impossible that the Vīra Pāndyan Mani Maṇḍapa could have been erected prior to that. Nor is it likely that Jaṭāvarman Vīra Pāṇḍya, appearing later, was the king connected with this benefaction, because the inscription, referred to above, clearly belongs to Māravarman Vīra Pāṇḍya. Among the two Māṛavarman Vīra Pāṇḍyas, the 14th century Vīra Pāṇḍya (accession 1334 A.D.) was in all probability the sovereign after whom the Maṇḍapa was designated, because the language and the palaeography of the inscription appear to belong to the 14th century A.D. Moreover, the architectural style of this porch is unquestionably older than that of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, which was constructed in the last quarter of the 15th century A.D.

Why is the porch described as Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa ? Very likely, it was constructed in the space which was, in earlier times known as Maṇi Ambalam. An inscription of Jaṭāvarman Udaiyār Cōḷa Pāndya, belonging to 1091 A.D., speaks of the village assembly meeting in Maṇi Ambalam. When a porch was constructed on that space, the name of the king in whose honour it was built, and the older designation were, perhaps, combined to confer the later appellation. The original name, Maṇi Ambalam, must have arisen by reason of the fact that, even in the 11th century A.D., that was the place where the big bell of the temple was hung up. A Kaimukku record of 1734 A.D., refers to the same porch as *'Maṇitūkku Maṇḍapa'* which signified the porch where the bell was

26. See Appendix—Inscription, No. 54.

suspended. This confirms the above suggestion regarding the genesis of its name.

The Sabha Maṇḍapa: That a Sabha or hall was constructed in 586 M.E. (1410 A.D.) through the munificence of one Mārtāṇḍa Varma is learnt from the Samskṛit verse inscribed at two places in the pagoda. The Vēnāḍ sovereign credited with this construction was none other than the famous Cēra Udaya Mārtānda Varma who ruled between 558 and 610 M.E.[27] The metrical restrictions of the verse must have stood in the way of the incorporation of the full name in the epigraph. But a pointer is furnished by the poetic description of the ruler as the 'great king of Kēraḷa'.

Which was the Sabha or the hall built by him in the Śucīndram temple ? The inscription is engraved in two places — one on the northern outer wall of the Udaya Mārtānda Maṇḍapa and another on a pillar in the porch in front of the Jayantīśvara shrines. Obviously the construction specified in the epigraph could not have been the pillared hall found immediately behind the western wall of the first prākāra and opposite the present 'Jayantīśvara shrines', for this porch is of too poor a pattern to have been undertaken by the celebrated monarch. Further, the crowd of pillars which support this Maṇḍapa leaves little space to serve as a hall or Sabha. Moreover, if that were the porch built by the Cēra Emperor, it is not likely that the Jayantīśvara shrines would have been constructed behind it. Above all, it seems inconceivable that the 'Sabha', proudly commemorated in the inscription by the "Emperor of Kērala", would have been built behind the main temple. Even at present, this spot is one of the least prominent places in the pagoda. Before the rise of the Jayantīśvara shrines, it was still less prominent or suitable for the construction of the hall. Therefore the Sabha Maṇḍapa, constructed by Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa, is likely to have been the porch connecting the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine and the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa, on the northern outer wall of which, the other inscription is found engraved.

Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa: The next structure that arose after the 'Sabha' of Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma was the grand pavilion, the 'Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa', which extends to the eastern extremity of Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa. Even after the latter was constructed, there must have existed a wide expanse of open space in front of it. On this space it was, that the magnificent Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa was

27. Nagamaiah: State Manual, Vol. I. p. 267, and T.A.S., VIII, p. 28.

built. Fortunately, we have definite information about the date of the completion of this structure. The Samskṛit verse engraved at the eastern end of the pavilion's northern inner wall states that, on Monday the first day of the bright fortnight of Tulām in 654 M.E. (1478 A.D.), Rāma Varma constructed the huge Maṇḍapa 'resembling Kailāsa'. It is known from an inscription at Quilon that this king had the surname Cempaka. That accounts for the name Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa given to the pavilion. But there occurs an apparent discrepancy in date, which calls for an explanation. On the northern façade of the Maṇḍapa, there appears an inscription of the same king, dated the 12th Cittirai 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.), which states that he bestowed certain gifts on the temple, seated in the Cempakarāman Maṇdapa. However, this seeming incongruity is easily explained. The date of the construction, specified in the inscription of 654 M.E., evidently, referred to the time when the pavilion was completed. The work was begun several years earlier, probably, long before 646 M.E.; and it was while the embellishment of the pavilion was in progress, that the king's gift was made and the earlier inscription was engraved. This exquisitely constructed edifice must have taken a considerable length of time for completion.

Āditya Maṇḍapa: Right in front of the Cempakarāman Mandapa and immediately to the west of the Eastern Śrībalipura, stands the narrow porch, described as the Āditya Maṇdapa, popularly known as the Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa. Neither the name Āditya Maṇḍapa, nor the date of its construction is found mentioned in any inscription. But the Kaimukku documents as well as the Paḍiyēṟṟam records (the chronicles of royal visits) and the temple accounts of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) mention the Āditya Maṇḍapa. None of these records, however, specifies the date when this porch was constructed. Circumstantial evidence alone has to be pressed into service in order to obtain a clue. It does not seem improbable that the Maṇḍapa was constructed soon after the Vaḍakkēḍam flagstaff was originally erected in its present position. Since reference is found to the endowment made by the above-mentioned ruler Rāmavarma in 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.) for the purpose of celebrating the 4th Utsava in the temple, and since the flagstaff is planted to the east of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, is it too much to suggest that the flagstaff and the Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa were erected by Rāmavarma ? More probably, Rāmavarma commenced the construction of the Maṇḍapa and it was completed by his successor Āditya Varma, whose inscription of 659 M.E. (1484 A.D.) is found in the temple. Obviously, that explains

the name Āditya Maṇḍapa applied to this porch. Its completion may be dated to the period between 654 and 659 M.E. (1479-1484 A.D.).

The Tekkēḍam flagstaff was originally erected by Viṭṭhala in 720 M.E. (1545 A.D.). The inscription of 720 M.E., noticed already, records his construction of the Gōpura and the erection of the Tekkēḍam Dhvajastambha. Evidently, Rāmavarma had erected only the Vadakkēḍam Dhvajastambha. It is not known whether Viṭṭhala had constructed any porch near the Tekkēdam flagstaff. In all probability, no construction appeared then, otherwise, the inscription would have certainly specified it. Another inscription on a pillar of the Tekkēdam part of the Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa reveals that the cost of erecting the pillar in 820 M.E. (1645 A.D.), was met by one Naṅgayya Amma, belonging to the family of Śēndan Śucīndravādi. This epigraph suggests that the Tekkēḍam wing of the Dhvajastambha Maṇḍapa was constructed in 820 M.E. (1645 A.D.).[28]

The Aṛamvalattamman Kōil : Among the shrines outside the main edifice, that dedicated to Aramvaḷattamman, the 'half-divine' virgin, was the next to appear after the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil. A striking feature about the history of this shrine is that, though its genesis is mysterious, the date of its origin can be fixed with a certain measure of accuracy. According to local tradition, Aramvalattamman, a girl of Tērūr, is reported to have suddenly disappeared while devoutly worshipping the deity. The date of this event is furnished by a record of the temple. A document executed on 5th Māśi 933 M.E. (1758 A.D), by the relatives of the girl with the Śrīkāryakkār of the temple, states that the mysterious disappearance of the virgin occurred on 16th Māśi 619 M.E. (1444 A.D.), and that a shrine dedicated to her was constructed soon afterwards.[29] There does not seem to be any ground for disbelieving that the shrine of Aṛamvaḷattamman was erected about 619 M.E. (1444 A.D.).

Ūñcal Maṇḍapa : Popular tradition, as well as the annual celebration of the Tirukkalyāṇam, connect the Aṛamvaḷattamman Kōil with the Ūñcal Mandapa. The Tirukkalyāṇam, the celebration of the marriage between Sthānumūrti and Aṛamvaḷattamman, is held annually in the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa. This suggests that this pavilion was constructed by the relatives of Aṛamvaḷattamman. In fact, the author of this benefac-

28. See Appendix—Inscription, No. 86. One of the recent records of the temple states that both the old Dhvajastambhas were removed since they had become worn-out by age and were substituted by fresh ones on 29th Edavam 1047 M.E. (June, 1872 A.D.).

29. See Appendix, No. 1.

tion is known to have been the ancestor of one Marayakkutty Pillay of Tērūr, as is learnt from the 'Records of Parivaṭṭams', viz., Records relating to the presentations of cloth on the day of the Car Festival. Significant is the fact that the family of Marayakkutty Pillay of 'Āladi Vīdu' in Tērūr represents the lineal descendants of Paḷḷiyarai Nācciyār, the mother of Aramvalattamman. Fortunately, an inscription engraved on a lintel of the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa states that on 25th Tai 759 M.E. (1584 A.D.) Iravi, the wife of Paṇḍāram Pillay had the porch constructed. Apparently, Iravi was a descendant of Paḷḷiyarai Nācciyār.[30]

The Gōpura: For well over a century after the rise of the Aṛamvaḷattamman shrine and the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, no additional structure is known to have appeared in the temple So far as our present knowledge goes, the next construction was the stately tower at the eastern gateway. The author of the edifice was the Vijayanagar general Viṭṭhala Mahārāja. Fortunately, the author's name and the date of the tower are learnt from an epigraph. That, Viṭṭhala and his brother had the Gōpura constructed in 720 M.E. (1545 A.D.) is the valuable piece of information which the inscription furnishes.

But, the entire tower, as we see it at present, was not completed then. If it were so, the work undertaken in 1056 M.E (1881 A.D.), concerning which, clear proof is available, would not have been necessary. The truth seems to be this; during Vitthala's time, the plinth basement was completed and, perhaps, a rather flimsy structure above it was also erected. But, even granting that only the basic structure of plinth was equipped then, it was no mean accomplishment. The excellent sculptures on the numerous panels of the plinth basement alone do great credit to the architects who planned and executed that part of the tower. The present upper edifice of the Gōpura is of very recent date. The renovation, or rather the re-construction of this structure was begun in 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D.), and completed in 1063 M.E. (1888 A.D.).[31] The mural paintings on the inner walls of the Gōpura, depicting themes from the Sthalapurāṇa, belong to the same time.

Gōpuravātal Shrines: If the basic structure of the Gōpura arose in 1545 A.D., the several images enshrined in the panels on both the wings of the inner doorway of the tower must have come into existence about

30. It is interesting to find that the same inscription records that a dancing girl, Mārtāndakkuṭṭy, daughter of Poycollāmeyyan paid for the construction of a pillar of the porch.

31. Appendix—Inscription, No. 91

the same time. Thus the shrines of Cidambarēśvarar and Kāḷi on the panels of the northern wall and of Nandikēśvarar and Śāsta on the southern wall are ascribable to this period. It is unthinkable that these images appeared long after the construction of the plinth structure, for it would have been difficult and risky to carve the panels and the images after the upper part of the tower was begun. Hence it is certain that about 1545 A.D. these shrines also came into existence. Concerning the image of Nandikēśvarar, there is definite epigraphic evidence showing that it existed in or before 1590 A.D. An inscription which registers a gift for a lamp to be burnt near the image of *'Nandīccurar Tampirān'* is dated 13th Mārkaḻi 766 M.E. (1590 A.D.). This proves that by 1590 A.D., at the latest, the shrine of Nandikēśvarar had arisen. What is true of this shrine seems true of others in the group.

Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Vināyakar: Most probably, soon after the rise of the Gōpura there appeared the shrine of Gaṇapati, described as Udaya mārtāṇḍa Vināyakar. Located on the outer fringe of the pagoda, this deity was set up there to serve as the guardian deity of the temple. No inscription furnishes the date of the shrine or the name of the ruler who had it constructed. Obviously its rise is to be ascribed to a Udaya Mārtāṇḍa, a Travancore ruler. Among the kings of that name associated with the Śucīndram temple, the one who probably constructed this Vināyaka shrine is Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa Venṟumaṇkoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varman (743-763 M.E. = 1568-1588 A.D.). If this Vināyaka image had not been transplanted in its present abode from some other part of the pagoda, for which there is absolutely no evidence, it is not at all likely that the king Udaya Mārtāṇḍa, either of the 4th or of the 6th century M.E., was the author of this shrine; because, by that time, the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa had not come into existence. It is inconceivable that a Vināyaka shrine presenting the guardian deity would have been established so far away, nearly 250 feet from the Mūlasthāna of the main temple, when there was no structure in between. Obviously therefore, there is a strong presumption for believing that Udaya Mārtāṇḍa of the 8th century M.E. was the ruler who set up this image and erected the shrine.[32]

Indra Vināyakar. Another shrine dedicated to Vināyaka is found to the north-west of the Gōpura, but there is no direct means of determining the date of its rise. True, the earliest of the Kaimukku records

32. Udaya Mārtāṇḍa's brother and successor, Bhūtala Vīra Ravi Varma instituted a Sandhi in the temple in his memory, a fact learnt from an inscription of 720 M.E. See Appendix—Inscription, No. 63.

available, viz., the one of 802 M.E. (1627 A.D.), refers to this shrine. But, that serves only to fix the upper limit of its date. There is, doubtless, the tradition that the Kaimukku ordeal was conducted from a very early period. Indrapāla Vināyakar, as the deity is described, is believed to have been associated with these ordeals from times of old. Moreover, the Sthalapurāṇa would have us believe that Indra himself worshipped this Vināyaka prior to his propitiation of Sthāṇumālaya.

Legends apart, the only other sources of inference left to us are the architectural style of the shrine and the iconographic features of the image. But the inference from the architectural style of that small shrine cannot be pressed very far. Even at a later stage, a construction on an unpretentious earlier pattern might have been adopted. Not so, the iconographic features of the figure. The image is remarkably age-worn. In fact, so far as the shape, and the iconographic details are concerned, the Indra Vināyakar seems to be an exact counterpart of Brahmarūpa Vināyakar. Since the latter is ascribable to a very early date, as far back as the 10th century A.D., it is probable that Indra Vināyakar also belongs to an early era, decidedly before the 13th or 12th century A.D.

Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar: Yet another Gaṇapati shrine is that of Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar found to the south of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. Fortunately, the date of its origin, and the name of the person who provided this construction are known through one of the old records. A palm-leaf document preserved in the Tekkumaṇ Matha furnishes valuable data concerning this shrine. It states that on the 14th of Āvaṇi 763 M.E. (1587 A.D.) the then eldest member of the Tekkumaṇ Matha, one of the nine Ūrāṇmaikkār of the temple, set up the shrine of Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar. The image was surnamed Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar, after the founder of the shrine, called Puruṣōttamar Nīlakaṇṭhar. Prodigious in size, this Gaṇapati is popularly described as Mukkuruṇi Piḷḷayār. This popular name, and the size of the figure, suggest that this Piḷḷayār is the counterpart of the one in the famous Cidambaram temple.

The 'Jayantīśvara' shrines: A great deal of confusion of ideas has prevailed about the so-called 'Jayantīśvara shrines'. By reason of five Vimānas appearing over the shrines, popularly, they have not only been considered to enshrine the Five Pāṇḍavās, but also as having been constructed by the very Pāṇḍavās themselves. Besides, an aetiological attempt has been made to ascribe the construction of the shrines to Jayanta, the son of Indra, who is believed to have been intimately con-

nected with the temple. It need hardly be repeated that these legendary stories have no historic basis.

An inscription engraved on a lintel in the Maṇḍapa in front of these shrines states that in 768 M E. (1593 A.D.) one Śucīndrādhivāsi, the lord of Navabhavana, consecrated the images of Śiva and Gauri 'Navabhavanapati Śri Śucīndrādhivāsi', was evidently one of the 9 Ūrāṇmaikkār of the temple, for the records speak of one of them as Śucīndrādhivāsi. But Navabhavanapati is as much applicable to Puttillam as to Pudumāḍam; and both of these were house-names of Ūrāṇmaikkār. A clue is found from a traditional practice, continued down to this day. On the 5th day of the Utsava, a Maṇḍapappaḍi, viz., special dīpārādhana or waving of lights accompanied by certain ceremonies, is conducted in the Jayantīśvara Maṇḍapa by the Puttillam member. Performed in honour of Śiva and Pārvati, this ceremony appears to commemmorate the foundation of the shrines by a member of the Puttillam house in 768 M.E. (1593 A.D.). Hence, there is a strong presumption for believing that it was the Puttillam Pōṟṟi who constructed the shrines of Śiva and Pārvati, or Śambhu and Gauri, as the inscription designates them.

Certain other inscriptions of Śucīndram reinforce the view that, about that time, there was a Śēndan of Puttillam who revelled in providing embellishments to temples. An epigraph in the Pērambalam shrine in Śucīndram,[33] speaks of Śēndan of Puttillam in connection with the construction of a Maṇḍapa in 772 M.E. (1596 A.D.). Besides, a few years later, viz., in 781 M.E. (1606 A.D.), the same member 'Puttillattu Śēndan Śivīndiravādi' is known to have constructed the Kulāśēkhara Piḷḷayār Kōil in Śucīndram.[34] These facts indicate that Śēndan of Puttillam was an enthusiastic patron of temples; and, in all probability, he was the author of the two shrines of 'Śambhu and Gauri' in the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple.

The real difficulty appears in determining the origin of the other shrines in the group. Can it be taken that all of them were set up in 768 M.E. by Puttillam ? The unity of construction of the shrines, as well as the common name 'Jayantīśvara shrines' now applied to the entire group, may suggest this probability. But the distinct names given to the two Śivalingas, as Rāmēśvarar and Nārāyaṇēśvarar, indicate that they were set up by persons other than 'Śēndan of 768 M.E.' Perhaps some other devotees established these shrines following the example of

33. Appendix — Inscription, No 77.
34. T.A.S., VIII, p 24.

Śēndan. However, there is no means of knowing when they were actually erected. In this connection it is noteworthy that a palm-leaf record dated 20th Alpaśi 1044 M.E. (1868 A.D.) speaks of an endowment at an earlier date by the Pūdumāḍam member for celebrating the Astami Rōhiṇi festival in the Kṛṣnasvāmy shrine of the group.[35] Perhaps, a member of the Pudumādam family had set up the Kṛṣnasvāmy shrine.

The contribution of the Nāyaks to the development of the temple · The 17th century A.D. witnessed a glorious epoch in the history of the Sucīndram temple by virtue of Tirumala Nāyak's benefactions. Though he came to South Travancore primarily as an invader, the devoted patron of religion and temples that he was, Tirumala, revelled in adding new structures, images and embellishments to places of worship Popular tradition ascribes several constructions and improvements within the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple, as well as outside, in the village of Śucīndram, to Tirumala Nāyak, the master-builder. But epigraphic evidence substantiating his activities has not come to light. The only inscription where some Nāyaks figure is that recording a sadāsēvai; but, it is not possible to identify the persons mentioned in the inscription. Perhaps they were connected with the family of Tirumala; the purport of the Sadāsēvai is stated as the invocation of the deity not merely for the prosperity of their family, but also for the expiation of their sins. Either, they belonged to the ruling family at Madurai or, were generals who participated in some of the plundering expeditions which were undertaken in the 17th century A.D. The date of the inscription is not ascertainable; only the month and the day of the month can be made out. It must, however, be repeated that local tradition about Tirumala's contributions is copious; and since he belonged to the 17th century A.D., only about 300 years ago, the popular reports may be credited with a certain measure of reliability.

Mākkāḷai : Now let us consider the work of Tirumala in the light of popular reports The setting up of the huge bull (the Mākkāḷai) in the Eastern Śrībalipura is ascribed to him. If a study of Tirumala's benefactions to the Madurai Temple furnishes any pointer, it is that he revelled in erecting figures and structures of a prodigious size. The

[35] "1044—3—20-നു, ഇവിടത്തെ ചെപ്പി ആവിത്തു്. ശുചീന്ദ്രം ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ ആവണി മാസത്തിൽ അഷ്ടമിരോഹിണിക്ക് ജഗന്തീശ്വരത്തു കൃഷ്ണസ്വാമിക്ക് പുതുമാടത്തു പോററിയുടെ വഴിപാടായി വെൺപടി പായസം."

Mākkālai of Śucīndram is certainly worthy of having been a product of Tirumala's artistic design.

Aṅgi for Viṣṇu. This great Nāyak ruler had no exclusive partiality for either the Śaivite or the Vaiṣṇavite persuasion. His patronage transcended these distinctions. In the Perumāl shrine of Tekkēdam, he endowed the elegantly shaped golden mask (aṅgi) for the image of Viṣṇu.[36] This fact is corroborated by the reference found in the petition submitted by the head of the Tekkuman Matha to the Travancore Government in 1934 A.D.[37]

Garuḍālvār shrine. The splendid shrine of Garuḍālvār, facing Tekkēdam Perumāl, is, in all probability another handiwork of Tirumala. Tradition apart, the portraits carved on the pillars of the Garuḍālvār shrine[38] provide a definite pointer. The principal portrait is that of Tirumala himself. Obviously therefore, the shrine was erected by him. Presenting sculptures of a high order, the shrine is worthy of the master-builder. As mentioned earlier, there is found on the southern outer wall of the shrine the strange representation of a balance and of a person being trampled underfoot by an elephant. Popular view holds that it depicts Tirumala punishing a goldsmith who played false with him. While the traditional account may be taken for what it is worth, the association of Tirumala's name with the piece of sculptural representation on the outer wall of the Garuḍālvār shrine lends support to the view that the shrine itself was the product of his munificence.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti: Behind the Garudālvār shrine, and attached to the southern wall of the Konrayaḍināthar Kōil, appears the small enclosure for Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Its location in the neighbourhood of the Garuḍālvār shrine, may suggest that Tirumala was the author of this, too. But, there is absolutely no other piece of evidence to support this suggestion. Nor does tradition associate the rise of this shrine with Tirumala. The

36. An Agastīśvaram Taluk Record of 10th Kārtikai 921 M E (1745 A D.) states that the Government of Bāla Mārtānda Varma constructed a 'Ilamkōil' or Bālālaya for Tekkēdam and performed some purificatory ceremonies (L R M. p. 10). Apparently, this refers only to some repairs in the shrine. It does not seem likely that the golden mask provided for the image was a gift of Bāla Mārtāṇḍa Varma

37. True, it is only a modern source But the eldest member of that house was one of the Ūrānmaikkār of the temple, and as such, had ample opportunities of knowing the events connected with the temple and also of possessing records pertaining to it. Moreover, from the context in which the above-mentioned fact concerning Tekkēdam is stated in the petition, it seems that the petitioners would have had no purpose in fabricating the matter

38. See Infra Chapter XII

image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is old. Moreover, the sages and disciples depicted in later shrines of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, are not found here. In the present state of our knowledge, nothing can be stated regarding the origin of the Dakṣiṇāmūrti shrine, except that it seems to be one of the early units of the temple.

The Eastern Śrībalipura : Among other constructions in the temple ascribable to Tirumala, it is likely that the erection, or rather the renovation, of the Eastern Śrībalipura forms another. Doubtless, the Eastern Śrībalipura is distinctly anterior in date to the other Śrībalipuras of the pagoda. The smaller girth of the pillars, the lower level of artistic merit presented by them, as well as the less developed corbels, all bear this out clearly. Moreover, the worn-out nature of the pillars and of the stone beams above, indicates that the Eastern Śrībalipura is considerably older in time than its counterparts in the temple. Regarding the date when the Eastern Śrībalipura was constructed, no documentary evidence has come to light. But, very probably, it was constructed only after 654 M.E. (1478 A.D.), in which year the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa was completed. The Śrībalipura could not have been built so far away from the main temple but for the huge pavilion intervening in between. Apparently the Eastern Śrībalipura was constructed in the present form in the time of Tirumala Nāyak, because the ceilings over 'Garuḍāḷvār' and 'Mākkāḷai' could not have been erected independently of the Eastern Śrībalipura. The unity of plan evident in the constructions of the Eastern Śrībalipura and the Maṇḍapas over the Mākkāḷai and the shrine of Garuḍāḷvār shows that all these were built about the same time, viz., during the period of Tirumala Nāyak.

Ceccaikkoṭṭāram and the Streets : Tirumala Nāyak's embellishments were not confined to the temple alone. His unflagging enthusiasm found ample scope even outside the pagoda. But the work outside was also actuated by the desire to exalt the temple. Tradition avers that the systematic lay-out of the broad streets running around the village, providing scope for the procession of Vāhanas and of the Cars in connection with the Utsavas, was undertaken by Tirumala. Obviously, the beautification of the village was considered a necessary complement to the embellishment of the temple. At the end of the South Street stands the palace, the Ceccaikkōṭṭāram, ascribed to Tirumala Nāyak. Popularly it is called 'Tirumala Nāyakkan Koṭṭāram'. His construction of a palace in the village reveals what a profound impression Sucīndram

and its glorious fane had produced on him. Besides, the Nāyakkar Matha, ascribed to Jayantiyappa Nāyaka, the brother-in-law of Tirumala, was built in the time of the latter. On the whole, the record of achievement in Śucīndram on the part of Tirumala Nāyak constitutes an additional feather in his cap of glory.

The Southern, Western and Northern Śrībalipuras. The latest of the principal constructions was the erection of the lofty Śrībalipura in the southern, western and northern prākārās. While the Eastern Śrībalipura was built in Tirumala Nāyaka's time, the other three came up much later. Regarding the exact date of the construction of the Southern, Western and Northern Śrībalipuras, there is a slight discrepancy in the known facts. The palm-leaf records in the possession of the Vaṭṭappalli Sthānikar indicate that the construction of the Śrībalipura was in progress in 951 M.E But, it is learnt from the records of the Tekkumaṉ Matha,[39] that the Śrībalipura was built during the period 970 to 973 M.E. There is thus a disparity of about 20 years. Both the sources of information agree in stating that it was undertaken under the patronage of Kārtikai Tirunāl Mahārāja.. Another independent source of information confirms the date furnished by the Tekkuman Matha Records The 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' contain a 'Sādhana' (communication) from the Dewan to the 'Piḷḷamār' of Nañcināḍ regarding the punishment of those 'Piḍāgaikkār' who had not co-operated with the Government in the construction of the Śrībalipura in Śucīndram. The 'Sādhana' bears the date 8th Āni 973 M.E. (1798 A.D.). This settles the date of the construction of the Śrībalipura ; it was effected between 970 and 973 M.E. (1795 and 1798 A.D.)[40]

It may be doubted whether the three Śrībalipuras were all constructed anew or whether they were only re-constructions of older structures. Inscriptions of the temple bear testimony to the fact that there existed a Śrībalipura many years prior to 973 M.E. (1798 A.D.). The epigraph dated 26th Tulām 722 M.E. (1546 A.D.) speaks of it, and incidentally, mentions the purpose which it served. It runs thus: '*Piṟattē Śivalippṟakārattile eḻuntaruḷukiṟavakaikkum*'. That affords a clear proof of the existence of a Śrībalipura in the 16th century A.D.

39. Petition submitted to the Travancore Government by the Pōṟṟi of Tekkuman Matha.

40. It is not easy to brush aside the date found in the records of the Vattappalli Matha. The only probability is that the work was begun some time about 951 M.E., and owing to some reason, not known to us, it was held in abeyance for a time and was renewed in 971 M.E. and eventually completed in 973 M.E. i.e., 1798 A.D.

Doubtless, this '*Piṟattē Śivalipṟakāram*' should have stretched beyond the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, because, earlier than the time of this inscription (722 M.E.), the latter pavilion had been completed. Hence, it is likely that in the same space now covered by the Śrībalipura, there was in existence a flimsier and less artistic Śrībalipura in the 16th century A.D., and perhaps still earlier. The older structure could have been constructed some time between 654 M.E. (1479 A.D.) and 722 M.E. (1546 A.D.).[41]

Citṟa Sabha: The pavilion called Citṟa Sabha appears to have been constructed before 804 M.E. (1629 A.D.). This is inferred from two epigraphs of that date, found inscribed on the two pillars which present the sculptured figures of Kāḷi and Vyāghrapāda respectively. Each of these registers the Sadāśēvai or perpetual worship of a devotee. The inscriptions do not furnish any other piece of information. But a palm-leaf record of the temple, dated 31st Āni 1020 M.E. (1845 A.D.), reveals that one Mātukkuṭṭy Mālayamma of Paṟakkai constructed the Citṟa Sabha and endowed lands to meet the expenses of the daily pūjā there.[42] Thus, the data provided by the two sources seem irreconcilable, for the pillars supporting the pavilion would not have appeared long before the pavilion itself. It seems that what Mālayamma constructed in 1845 A.D. was nothing but the shrine within the Citṟa Sabha, viz., the structure at the northern extremity of the pavilion, presenting a mirror as the object of worship. The main edifice had come into existence before 804 M.E. (1629 A.D.). The fact that there appears on the face of one of the pillars a portrait sculpture, probably of a Malayāḷi king, suggests that he had erected the principal structure. Unfortunately, there is no means of ascertaining the identity of this king. If a suggestion may be hazarded, the monarch was perhaps the famous Bhūtalavīra Śrī Vīra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma who ruled over Vēṇāḍ between 691 and 710 M.E. (1516 and 1535 A.D.). He is known to have made endowments to the temple at Kanyākumari. Besides, as observed earlier, he erected the shrine of Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Vināyakar in Śucīndram itself. It was in his honour that his brother Bhūtala Vīra Ravi

41 The description of 'Cuṟṟu Maṇḍapa' or of 'Tiruccuṟṟumandapa' in the earlier inscriptions, for example, in that of 1000 A.D. and of 1209 A.D., denoted the first prākāra only. This is perfectly evident from the Ācārakkanakku of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.), wherein the 'Tiruccuṟṟumandapa' and 'Śrībalipura' are spoken of as two distinct entities.

42. See Appendix, No. II

Varma instituted the Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Sandhi in the Śucīndram temple. Between 1535 and 1629 A.D. no other Vēṇāḍ ruler is known to have provided notable benefactions to this temple. It may be tentatively taken that Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma was the architect of the Citra Sabha and that the portrait in the pavilion represents this monarch.

Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa and the 'Musical Pillars': The raised platform stretching between the Northern Śrībalipura and the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa is mentioned as the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa in the Ācārakkaṇakku of 994 M.E. The exquisite group of pillars, known as the 'Musical Pillars' support the Maṇḍapa. When did these splendid works of art arise? Two of the four groups of pillars abut on the Northern Śrībalipura, and even a casual visitor may observe that they were erected about the time when the present Northern Śrībalipura was constructed.

Fortunately, a palm-leaf record furnishes the date of the construction of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa and thus presumably of the Musical Pillars, too. The record[43] states that Saumiya Nārāyaṇappayyan paid 720 fanams in 973 M.E. (1798 A.D.) towards the erection of one pillar of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa. The same record shows that the erection of the Maṇḍapa itself was undertaken by the Government of Travancore. Thus, it was as a part of the embellishment of the Northern Śrībalipura that the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa and the Musical Pillars were erected about 973 M.E. (1798 A.D.).

Vasanta Maṇḍapa: When did the charming Vasanta Maṇḍapa, located between the Southern Śrībalipura and the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, come into existence? That the Vasanta Maṇḍapa of the temple in early days was the small room situated to the north of the Namaskāra Maṇḍapa of Tekkēḍam, is evident from the Kaimukku

43. "സൌമ്യനാരായണപ്പയ്യന്റെ കണക്കായിട്ട് കോട്ടാർ ചാവടിയിൽ നിന്നും ആണ്ടു് ഒന്നുക്ക് 720 പണം അടുത്തൂൺ വക വെച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന വകയിൽ 73-ാമാണ്ടു് 720 പണം കൊടുപ്പാനുണ്ടെന്നും ആവകപ്പണം ശുചീന്ദ്രം കോവിൽ കുലശേഖരമണ്ഡപം തിരുപ്പണി വകയ്ക്കു് സൌമ്യനാരായണപ്പയ്യന്റെ കണക്കായിട്ട് ഒരു തൂൺ പണി ചെയ്യിക്കുന്നതിനു്......"

record of the Āni 909 M.E.[44] (1734 A.D.). The new edifice must have certainly arisen after that date. None of the records of the temple throws any light on the construction of the present Vasanta Maṇḍapa, though from an inscription it is evident that, long before the 18th century the Vasanta festival was conducted.

Local tradition comes to our aid. It is widely believed that the same lady Mātukkutty Mālayamma of Parakkai, who embellished the Citra Sabha, had the new Vasanta Mandapa erected. It is added that, before the entire construction of the Maṇḍapa was completed, and before she could endow property for its maintenance, she passed away. Hence, for a long time the new Manḍapa was not used for the purpose for which it was erected. It was only after 1925 A.D. that the Dēvasvam authorities began to employ it for the purpose originally intended. Now, every year, during Summer, the images of Śucīndaperumāḷ and Umayammai are removed to the Maṇḍapa and kept on the elevated platform inside. The actual date of the construction of the Vasanta Maṇḍapa was about 1020 M.E. (1845 A.D.).

Kaṅkāḷanāthar Kōil: It is difficult to determine the origin of the Kaṅkālanāthar Kōil, located near the Nīlakaṇtha Vināyakar shrine. The only sources of information about its origin are the accounts of the temple of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.), and the record specifying the beneficiaries of Parivaṭṭams or presentations of cloth on the occasion of the Car Festival. From the accounts of 994 M.E., it is clear that the shrine had arisen prior to that date. Absence of mention about it in the earlier records may suggest that the date of its origin was not much earlier than 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.).

The list of the beneficiaries of the Parivaṭṭams indicates that one Śivaññāṉam was given Parivaṭṭam in honour of his having constructed the Kaṅkāḷanāthar Kōil. The descendant of Śivaññāṉam, who bears the same name, belongs to the village of Śītappāl, near Bhūtappāṇḍy. He is a retired Proverticār, a local revenue official. But the image of Kaṅkāḷa-

44 "അവിടെ നിന്നും യോഗം എണീററു് തെക്കെടത്തു് സന്നിധിയിൽ തെക്കെപ്പുറത്തു് കരിവേലക്കല്ലിന്റെ സമീപം വസന്തമണ്ഡപത്തിന്റെ കിഴക്കെപ്പുറത്തു് യോഗം ഇരിക്കണം."
Evidently near the present Madappalli there was a small room used as the temple treasury. '*Karuvēlam*' means treasury. On the rectangular monolith, now found in the Citra Sabha and originally used for the Vasanta Festival, there is an inscription which records that one Śavarikittinan Īccuramūrty of Akkarai made a gift of this carved monolith to the temple on 15th Alpaśi 891 M.E. (1715 A.D.).

nāthar appears to belong to a much earlier age. In fact, it resembles the bronze icons of Kaṅkāḷanāthar of the Cōḷa epoch. Perhaps, the image was in existence in some part of the temple from an early time. The enshrining of it at the present place was probably undertaken some time before 994 M.E. through the efforts of the above-mentioned Śivaññāṉam

Cēravātal Śāsta : When did the various shrines located in the different parts of the Southern, Western and Northern Śrībalipuras come into existence ? In other words, what can be said about the origin of the shrines of Cēravātal Śāsta, Rāmasvāmy Kōil and Bhairava ? Merely on the basis of their location, it cannot be held that they were all set up only after the Śrībalipuras were re-constructed in 973 M.E. The iconographic features of the images inside, as well as the architectural patterns of these structures, warrant the view that they are much older. The vimānas over all the three of them appear to be comparatively recent constructions. Local tradition has it that the vimānas of these shrines were renovated when the Śrībalipuras were re-constructed.

An intriguing fact connected with the Śāsta shrine is that in its south-western corner is found a small image of Vināyaka. When and how did it appear there ? Either the image of Vināyaka which was originally in some other part of the temple was removed to its present abode, or what is more probable, originally the shrine of Vināyaka was housed in that particular spot, and Śāsta was a later importation. The latter view is supported by the fact that at the south-western corner of an east-facing Śiva temple, often, it is a Vināyaka shrine that is located. It is further reinforced by the circumstance that the image of Vināyaka appears decidedly older than that of Śāsta.

It is well known that Śāsta worship, though common throughout South India, is more prominently noticed in the regions of the Malabār Coast than elsewhere. The Kēraḷōlpatti states that in order to protect Kēraḷa, Paraśurāma built a chain of temples along the Ghats dedicated to Śāsta. Apart from this legendary lore, the fact is indisputable that in Travancore and in Kēraḷa, numberless Śāsta temples exist, the most celebrated among them being the one on the summit of Śabarimalai. The name, Cēravātal Śāsta, that the deity in Sucīndram has acquired, is perhaps an indication that the image was established there by a Vēṇāḍ ruler. But, none of the available sources throws light on either the identity of the king who effected it or on the time when it was done. Local enquiry, too, is of little assistance in the matter. To postulate the view that because Cēra Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma, the Travancore king, had

erected a Sabha in the temple, the establishment of the Cēravātal Śāsta shrine may well be ascribed to him is to proceed on too slender a basis. All that can be stated at present is that the Śāsta shrine must have arisen sometime between 1479 and 1546 A.D., by which date, the *Piṟattē Śīvaliprakāram'* had come into existence.

Rāmasvāmy Kōil : This shrine at the western extremity of the Northern Śrībalipura, too, appears to have arisen earlier than 973 M.E There is no inscriptional evidence concerning the shrine. The local tradition is that the Rāmasvāmy Kōil arose more than four hundred years ago. But, it must be observed that a chronological estimate based on popular tradition is anything but dependable The iconographic features indicate that the enshrined images belong to a period earlier than the 17th century A.D. Located in a position, symmetrical with that of the Śāsta shrine, perhaps, this, too, arose about the same time, viz., at some date between 1479 and 1546 A.D.

Kāla Bhairava shrine . The existence of the Kāla Bhairava shrine near the northern entrance to the temple, and the age-worn character of the image enshrined, suggest that it belongs to an early date, far earlier than 973 M.E. Probably it existed within the older *'Piṟattē Śīvaliprakāram'* itself. Since the belief must have appeared long ago that Kāla Bhairava as a guardian deity should be worshipped before turning to the other deities, it is likely that the shrine is of very early date. Tradition avers that the Bhairava shrine was in existence at the present place even at the time that the neighbouring Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil was set up. If this popular version is to be believed, it may be taken that the shrine of Bhairava arose about the 13th century A.D

Nāṭakaśāla : Last came the long porch at the eastern entrance leading to the Gōpuravātal. That the splendid structure of the Nātaka-śāla in the present form is a rather recent construction, is evident from its architectural style. Doubtless, it arose only subsequent to the re-construction of the Śrībalipura, for the portraits of the two persons, who played a leading part in the collection of funds for that purpose, are found at the eastern end of the Nāṭakaśāla But, that very fact indicates that the Nāṭakaśāla should have arisen not long after the construction of the Śrībalipura. The accounts of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) speak of the Nāṭakaśāla. Hence the rise of this porch may be dated to a period between 972 and 994 M.E. (1797 and 1819 A.D.).

The popular report is that the Nāṭakaśāla was the benefaction of certain Dēvadāsis attached to the temple. Eight feminine figures, each

carved at the base of each of the eight pillars in the entrance hall, are said to represent those donors. But, this is an instance of the popular belief containing a half-truth which passes for the whole truth. Evidently, the Dēvadāsis had contributed a part of the cost of the construction, or perhaps, they erected only the pillars which present their figures. That, besides the Dēvadāsis, others too, had contributed their share towards this construction, is clear from the inscription found on the face of a pillar on the northern terrace flanking the Nāṭakaśāla. It records that the pillar was a gift of Jatavēdan Dēvaki Ammai of Puttillam. Puttillam was, as observed earlier, the house-name of one of the Ūrāṇmaikkār of the temple. Thus, it seems that several individuals had a share in the erection of this splendid edifice. Very probably, the Dēvadāsis had donated a large part of the funds needed for the purpose.

A survey of the origin and development of the temple reveals that it was from humble and unpretentious beginnings that the mammoth leviathan has sprung up. Through a period extending over ten centuries, fresh additions, new images, and elaborate structures were introduced from time to time. The unity of the entire edifice, as it stands at present, is amazing, particularly in comparison with such huge temples as those of Cidambaram, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai or Śrīraṅgam. A casual visitor may form the impression that the whole fabric was constructed in accordance with a pre-conceived plan. In reality, however, for well over a thousand years, new additions and fresh embellishments have continued to appear, and, like most hoary institutions, the temple at Śucīndram presents the handiwork of ages.

C H A P T E R V I

HISTORY OF THE MANAGEMENT

SECTION I FROM THE RISE OF THE BRAHMADĒYA TO 1000 A.D.

Sucīndram — a Brahmadēya. Śucīndram had become a brahmadēya by the middle of the 10th century A.D. This is clear from the inscription of the 14th year of Cōḷan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya.[1] There is a great probability that even a century earlier, viz., by about the 9th century A.D. itself, Śucīndram had been established as a brahmadēya. This may be inferred from an inscription, belonging to the 5th year of Māṛan Caḍayan,[2] which mentions Nṛipaśēkharavaḷanallūr (modern Kakkāḍ), a village situated hardly a mile to the east of Śucīndram, as a dēvadāna of 'Emperumān at Tiruccuvīndiram'. Is it not likely that Śucīndram itself had been settled as a brahmadēya by the time that an adjoining village was bestowed as a gift on the deity ?[3]

1 T A S., III, p. 72.

2. T.A.S., IV, p. 118.

3. The later inscriptions speak of Śucīndram as a Caturvēdimangalam, the typical name by which the brahmadēya village was then described. The term Caturvēdimangalam denotes a brahmin village, inhabited primarily by pious and learned brahmins, well versed in the Vēdas. Brahmadēyas, mangalams or agrahāras, as they were variously called, were invariably created by royal grants. Faith in the unique merit of the gift of land (bhūdāna) to brahmins, explains the endowment of numerous brahmadēyas. A Dēvadāna village was one bestowed as a gift on a temple for maintaining daily worship, special festivals, lamps, flower-gardens; for feeding Brahmins and providing jewels; or for providing certain other services to the temple. See A R E. 1913, p. 85

Though it is not possible to determine the exact date, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Śucīndram was endowed as a brahmadēya by one of the Pāṇḍya kings of the 9th century A.D.[4] This is evident from the fact that the earliest inscriptions bear the regnal years of these rulers. Therefore, the early constitution of the Śucīndram village was, in all probability, similar to those of the brahmadēyas in the southern part of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom. Fortunately, we get from an inscription of the 35th year of a Māṛan Caḍyan[5] a glimpse of the constitution of the Mānūr brahmadēya, located about 50 miles from Śucīndram. We learn from this record that there was a sovereign assembly, the Mahāsabhai, managing the affairs of the autonomous village. That there existed a Mahāsabhai in the brahmadēyas is corroborated by an epigraph of the 16th year of Varaguna Mahārāja at Ambāsamudram[6] and by another of the same king at Tiruccendūr[7] There are numberless inscriptions in other parts of South India[8] which confirm this fact.

The Mahāsabhai. The fact that a similar Mahāsabhai was actively functioning in Śucīndram is learnt from several epigraphs of the temple. But, it is not possible to determine whether there was an exact resemblance in the organization of the Mahāsabhai in all the brahmadēyas The Mānūr record, for instance, prescribes certain minimum qualifications of property and education for membership in the assembly. There is no means of knowing whether or not this prescription was in force in Śucīndram. But, beyond doubt, the Mahāsabhai in Śucīndram, like those in other brahmadēyas, exercised a supreme control over the affairs of the village in general and of the temple in particular.

4. Perhaps, Śrī Māṛa Śrī Vallabha or Parāntaka Vīra Nārāyaṇa (Māran Caḍayan) was the author of the settlement

5 See E. I, Vol. XXII, pp. 5 ff. K. A. N. Sastri identifies the king of this record with Jaṭilavarman of the Ānamalai and Ambāsamudram inscriptions and the Vēḷvikkuḍi and Madras Museum Plates A. S Ramanatha Aiyar, on the other hand, suggests on palaeographic grounds that the king was probably Vīra Nārāyaṇa Caḍayan; but, apart from the fact that palaeography is too vague a basis of inference in distinguishing reigns of the same epoch, the known fact of the high regnal years of the king of the Mānūr record and of Jatilavarman seems to settle the identification in favour of the latter. If the Mānūr inscription belongs to the reign of Jaṭilavarman, it presents a picture of rural administration in the Pāṇḍyan country of a period, well over a century earlier than that furnished by the famous Uttaramērūr inscriptions.

6 E. I., Vol. IX, pp. 92-93

7 A. R E. 26 of 1912.

8 e.g. 12 of 1898, 152 of 1895, 240 of 1922, 176 of 1930.

Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai: However, the management of the daily affairs of the temple, as well as of its finances, fell to the lot of a smaller body called the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai. One of the very early inscriptions[9] of the place, that of Māran Caḍayan, refers to this institution. Fortunately, this record gives us an insight into some of the characteristic functions which it discharged. An individual, wishing to provide for the feeding of brahmins, purchased a piece of land from the Mūlaparuda Sabhai and settled the property on it again for rendering the service. The inscription adds that the same donor endowed the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai with a certain amount of gold for the purpose of making a crown and ornaments for the image of Amarabhujaṅgaperumāḷ in the temple. This is one of the several epigraphs indicating the powers wielded by the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai in the management of the temple; in particular, it shows how the financial responsibilities were undertaken by this body. Later inscriptions [10] record how the ewes or cows, which were presented by pious persons in order to supply ghee for the maintenance of lamps in the temple, were actually shown and passed on to the members of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai. The management of the brahmadēya lands, either by leasing them out to tenants or by directly farming them with the help of day-labourers, the supervision of the rites and ceremonies in the temple and the enforcement of the conditions entered into with the donors of the gifts constituted part of the duties of this Sabhai. The Śucīndram inscriptions reveal that the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai was not a mere ornamental body, registering formally the transactions of the temple; on the other hand, they prove, beyond doubt, that it was an executive organization charged with heavy responsibilities. Unfortunately, details regarding its numerical strength or the mode of its composition are lacking.

It has been stated that the etymology of the word 'Paruḍa Sabhai' suggests the origin of the term from Samskṛit.[11] The Tamiḻ 'Sabhai' or 'Savai' is derived from the Samskṛit word 'Sabha', while 'Paraḍai' is probably a corruption of the Samskṛit 'Pariṣad'. What does 'Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai' signify? Dr. Hultzch translates the term as 'the chief members of the assembly'. Does he imply that the leading members of the Mahāsabhai constituted the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai? If he does, it has

9. T. A. S., IV, p. 118.

10. e g. Inscription of Cadayan Māran—T. A. S, IV, p. 123, and another of Parāntaka I, E. I., Vol. V, p. 43.

11. E I., Vol. V, p. 43 and S. I I, Vol. III, p 216 note.

to be urged that the term, by itself, does not warrant this inference. Nor is it likely that the qualifying term 'Mūla' was employed to denote that it was the central or vital sabhai, as distinguished from others. This explanation, too, would be redundant, since there was no other Paruda Sabhai in the village. In fact, the epithet, 'Mūla', prefixed to the name of the body, appears to have been nothing more than a qualifying expression indicative of the sacred functions which the Paruḍa Sabhai discharged.[12]

Relationship between the Mahāsabhai and the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai: What was the nature of the relationship between these two institutions? The inscriptions do not throw adequate light on this question; but, they afford scope for certain deductions. In the first place, the epigraphs indicate that the Mahāsabhai itself was, in a large measure, pre-occupied with the temple and religious charities. This is not surprising, for, in a brahmadēya village, the temple was the primordial institution. Secondly, there does not appear to have existed a clear-cut allocation of functions between the two Sabhais. For instance, while in the earlier inscriptions we find the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai receiving the gifts and making arrangements for the fulfilment of the conditions, in certain others, as in that of the 14th year of Cōlan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya, it is stated that the donor entrusted the money to the Mahāsabhai *(Ivvūr Mahāsabhaiyār vaśam)*, for the maintenance of a lamp in the temple. It is added that the Mahāsabhai invested the amount in land, from the proceeds of which, ghee and wick were to be regularly provided. How can this deviation be explained? Evidently, there was no hard and fast rule; it was perhaps determined by the choice of the donor, the nature of the donation or the convenience of the Sabhais. It would be unhistorical to view these early institutions in the light of modern ideas of watertight departmentalism.

But there is no doubt that the Mahāsabhai was the sovereign assembly enjoying supreme authority; it seems to have determined what powers were to be exercised by the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai and the officers of the village. This is perfectly clear from the epoch-making

12. Compare the similar usage of 'Mūlasthāna' denoting the seat of the deity. The term 'Mūla' also means 'early' 'original' or 'basic'. But, it is not likely that it signified any of these ideas here, for, neither in Śucīndram, nor in any other South Indian village, is the Mūlaparuda Sabhai known to have had an earlier origin than the Mahāsabhai.

arrangement recorded in the inscription of 1000 A.D.[13] It states that the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai submitted to the Mahāsabhai its resignation of the management of the temple. The record mentions that the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai represented its inability to collect the rent from the tenants and to manage the other responsibilities entrusted to it, and that it restored all the powers to the Mahāsabhai. A provision was added that, after having given up the responsibilities, should any individual member of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai lay claim to the collection of the rents or the management of the temple affairs, a fine of 10 kaḻañju of gold was to be imposed on him. In fairness, it was also enacted that, should any tenant press any claim against the members of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, he would be fined 50 kaḻañju of gold. Thus, the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai passed a self-denying ordinance and sank into oblivion. The circumstances which led to its dissolution are found interesting. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to hold that in the history of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, as well as of the Mahāsabhai at Śucīndram, the year 1000 A.D. marks an important epoch.

The fall of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai: Unfortunately, the events culminating in this decisive step are not quite clear. It appears that the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai renounced its powers in a spirit of peevishness. Although there is no direct mention of this estrangement, probably, the members of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai had lost the confidence of the Mahāsabhai on account of some action of theirs; or, when they found it difficult to collect the dues from the tenants in time, an expression of disapproval on the part of the Mahāsabhai might have led to this development. From the promptness with which the Mahāsabhai set about instituting new offices to take over the responsibilities surrendered by the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, it may be inferred that the Mahāsabhai was not taken by surprise or struck with despair. The inscription adds that two Vāriyars and a Karaṇattān were appointed, evidently to undertake the functions exercised by the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai. Perhaps, the rest of the inscription specifies the duties and privileges of these officers; but it is a sealed book, since that portion of the epigraph is now hidden from view by a wall.

It would be interesting to know whether the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, which was dissolved in 1000 A.D., was revived later. So far as the inscriptions of the temple indicate, the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, as such,

13. T. A. S., II, pp. 6-7.

with its old name and traditional functions, does not appear to have been revived. Indeed, for well over two centuries after the exit of this Sabhai, there does not figure any organization other than the Mahāsabhai.[14] In all probability, the Mahāsabhai itself assumed the entire functions of the temple as well as of the village, and discharged them with the help of a number of officials working under its immediate control.

SECTION 2. THE RISE OF THE YŌGAKKĀR (ŪRĀṆMAIKKĀR)

The need of a compact organization. The need for another institution besides the Mahāsabhai did not disappear. A small compact body was found essential for exercising efficient control over the affairs of the temple. This need was felt all the more with the advance of years, when, on the one hand, due to the growth of population the Mahāsabhai became a larger and unwieldy body, and, on the other hand, the wealth and responsibilities of the temple increased considerably.

The Yōgam — the successor of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai: About the middle of the 13th century A.D. there sprang an organization which practically became the successor of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai. The new body was what came to be known in later times as that of the Yōgakkār, otherwise called Ūrānmaikkār, Ūrāḷar or Śrīkāryam Ceyvār. The epigraphic evidence is positive that, since the middle of the 13th century, the supreme control over the temple was exercised by a group of Malayāḷi Pōṟṟi brahmins. How and when did they appear on the arena of Śucīndram? The petition[15] submitted to the Government by the Pōṟṟi of Tekkumaṉ Maṭha (the descendant of one of the Yōgakkār) states that "in 1117 A.D. the ruler of Travancore, then known as the Kūpaka King, defeated Jayasimha the Pāṇḍyan Emperor, conquered South Travancore and constituted a body of Yōgakkār to control the temples at Trivandrum and Śucīndram." The reference in the petition, by itself, is not an absolutely reliable datum; as observed earlier, several known circumstances

14. See, for example, the inscriptions of Jatāvarman Sundara Cola Pāṇḍya, Jaṭāvarman Uḍaiyār Cōla Pāṇḍya and Māravarman Śrīvallabha—T A. S, IV, pp. 131-139.

15. The petition, under reference, seems to be a fairly dependable document, because, as found mentioned therein, it has been prepared on the basis of the old records of the Matha. Besides, the head of the Tekkuman Matha was a leading member of the Yōgakkār. He was the 'Nityakārya Yōgam' or the master of the daily ceremonies. 'Jayasimha', appearing in the petition, is perhaps a slip for 'Rājasimha'.

lend support to it. The inscriptions of Vīra Kēraḷa (1117 to 1145 A.D.) in Nāñcināḍ, the name Vīrakēraḷacaturvēdimangalam applied to Śucīndram, the document of 305 M.E. (1130 A.D.), said to be a copy of the order of Vīra Kēraḷa appointing the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi to the temple, and finally the epigraphic evidence of continued Vēṇāḍ supremacy at the hands of Kōda Kēraḷavarma—all point to the probability of some Malayāḷi brahmins having been stationed in Śucīndram by Vīra Kēraḷa.

The organization of the Yōgam (1229 A.D.) : When was the Sabhai of the Yōgakkār, consisting of the Malayāḷi brahmins, or 'Pōṟṟis', as they were called, constituted in Śucīndram ? Though inscriptions[16] reveal that there appeared Malayāli brahmins in the place from 301 M.E. (1126 A.D.) onwards, it does not seem to have been until 404 M.E. (1229 A.D.) that the body of Yōgakkār was formally organized. At any rate, it is indisputable that the charter which embodies the constitution of that body is found only in the inscription of 404 M.E. This epigraph[17] records that a group of brahmins, hailing from the village of Kīḻkarai, constituted themselves into eight units or houses in Śucīndram. Most of the house-names appearing in the inscription are identical with those of the later Yōgakkār. The inscription registers their resolution that the elders of these eight houses were to manage the affairs of the village and of the temple, subject to the authority of the Mahāsabhai. "*Ivvaḍaivu eṭṭilum aḍaivukaḷil anṟanṟu Mūttavar Mahāsabhaikkamaññu kūṭṭamkūḍi grāmakāriyavum dēvakāriyavum ceyvārākavum.*" Besides, it mentions the privilege to be enjoyed by them : 'the food, after being offered to the deities, is to be shared by the members of the eight houses.' Doubtless, this document constitutes the charter which registers the formation of the new Temple-Sabhai, the body of Yōgakkār.

These eight brahmins, the natives of Kīḻkarai, belonged to the class known in later times as 'Pōṟṟis'. In fact, the Yōgakkār are described in the palm-leaf documents of the temple as Pōṟṟis. Who were the Pōṟṟis ? Did they belong to the same section as the Nambūdiris who became the Śāntikkār (arcakas) of the pagoda ? It is not easy to give a definite answer, for there has occurred a frequent intermingling of the

16. See, for example, T.A.S, VIII, p. 32 and Ibid p. 36.

17. T.A.S, VIII, p. 23. It is noteworthy that this inscription is engraved on a wall of the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Mani Manḍapa, where the 'Sabhai' of the temple meets even at present. Now the Sabhai consists of the Tantri, Śāntikkār, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar and the Government officials.

two groups. The Pōṟṟis of the present often describe themselves as Nambūdiris.

In fact, they were originally resident in Canara, and they immigrated into Cochin and Travancore several centuries ago. Tiruvalla, in North Travancore, became one of their strongholds. The Pōṟṟis, along with the Nambūdiris, were associated with the temples in the West Coast. The ruling monarchs, too, seem to have settled them in particular villages in order to look after certain temples.[18] Gradually, they attained a leading position in the country.

The Pōṟṟi Yōgakkār of Śucīndram did not form an isolated group. They had a close connection with the similar body in Trivandrum. The petition of the Tekkumaṇ Pōṟṟi, mentioned earlier, states that the Yōgakkār of both the temples were identical. While adequate evidence supporting this statement is not available, it is significant that two of the Yōgakkār, namely, Araśil and Maṇalikkara, have from an early date held the position in both the pagodas.

Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar tiruvaḍi : Inscriptions of the period ranging between 392 and 406 M.E. (1217 and 1231 A.D.) prove clearly that there existed an intimate connection between the managers of the temples at Śucīndram and Trivandrum as early as the 13th century A.D. An important personality, 'Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar tiruvaḍi', figures as a high religious dignitary in as many as eight inscriptions of Śucīndram.[19] The fact, that in some of these records he appears as a person of authority, suggests that he exercised a supervision over the business of the pagoda. It is significant that this 'Gōvinda prajñā bhiṭārar tiruvaḍi' was actively associated with the Trivandrum temple. The inscription of 406 M.E. (1230 A.D.)[20] states that the Mahāsabhai and the Sabhai of Śucīndram, assembling together in the presence of Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar, decided to surrender the control over the Śāntikkār of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple to the 'Bhiṭārar'. Moreover, it adds that, after the time of Gōvinda prajñā bhiṭārar, the control over the Śāntikkār was to be entrusted to

18. There is an interesting copper plate inscription of Tirupparappu (T.A.S., I, p. 199), belonging to the 9th century A.D., which records the settlement of Pōṟṟis. The name 'Tiruvalla Vāḻ talamanēi Nāgasanman', occurring in the record is suggestive. 'Talamanē' is still the house-name of a Pōṟṟi.

19. See Appendix-Inscriptions Nos. 36, 38, 41, 43, 44, 46, 48 and 49.

20. Appendix-Inscription No. 49.

the 'Great Tiruvaḍi' of Trivandrum.[21] Clearly, it proves the intimate relationship that existed between the two temples.[22]

The powers of the Yōgakkār: Let us resume the early history of the Yōgakkār. If there existed a connection between the Yōgakkār of Śucīndram and of Trivandrum, it is legitimate to infer that the position and powers of both the bodies were more or less similar. Probably, at the very beginning, when Vīra Kēraḷa established Malayāḷi brahmins in Śucīndram, as part of a scheme of stabilizing his authority, he organized them into a group on the model of the Yōgakkār of Trivandrum, who are known to have flourished since the 9th century A.D. If that were not the case, at any rate, by the 13th century, when connection between the Yōgakkār of both the places is definitely known to have existed, the Śucīndram body would have imitated the institution of the Trivandrum temple.

Regarding the latter, the records of the pagoda furnish certain interesting details. Shankunny Menon writes about the Yōgakkār of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple thus:[23] "The old records in the Trivandrum pagoda show that on the 5th Ciṅgam of the 1st Kollam Era i.e., 5 days after the promulgation of the new year, the members of the five royal houses of the Travancore family, the Svāmiyār (the ecclesiastical head) and all the nobility assembled in the Trivandrum pagoda and introduced certain new rules and ordinances for the conduct of the daily, monthly and yearly performances of pūjās and other ceremonies in the pagodas." The Yōgakkār of Śucīndram, too, must have exercised the same rights.

The composition of the Yōgam: The Yōgam at Śucīndram is not known to have consisted of any but the Pōṟṟis. In Trivandrum, on the other hand, the king himself was a member, though he had half a vote

21. Apparently, the 'Great Tiruvaḍi' was a successor of Vilvamaṅgala Svāmiyār, who is believed to have founded the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple of Trivandrum

22. Though Gōvinda prajñā, perhaps, as the representative of the 'Great Tiruvaḍi' figures exclusively in the inscriptions of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple, it is not to be concluded that his influence was confined to this Visnu shrine, located about 100 yards to the north of the main pagoda. The inscription of 400 M.E. (1225 A.D.) reveals that the Dvārakai Emperumān shrine was, in its turn, connected with the main temple. The palm-leaf records show that both of them continued to be governed by the same organization in the 16th century A.D. and later.

23. Shankunny Menon: 'History of Travancore', p. 89.

only ! The Trivandrum Yōgam was composed of one Nambūdiri Sanyāsi (the successor of Vilvamangalam Svāmiyār) six Pōṟṟi Brahmins and one Nair nobleman,[24] besides the king. Thus, they constituted the 'Eṭṭara Yōgam' of the temple, viz, the body consisting of eight and a half units. Śucīndram did not follow the example of Trivandrum in this respect. Appearing in 1229 A.D. as a group of eight Pōṟṟis, its number was raised to nine at a later date. It is not known when this addition was made. The inscriptions, as well as the palm-leaf records, beginning from the 16th century A.D., speak of nine members. Evidently, sometime between the 13th and 16th century A.D., the change was effected.

Relationship between the Mahāsabhai and the Yōgam : There is no doubt that during the early period of the history of the Yōgakkār at Śucīndram, the powers of the body were moderate. It functioned under the authority of the Mahāsabhai. The latter, composed of the descendants of the original brahmin settlers of the brahmadēya, could not be brushed aside. In fact, the inscription of 404 M.E. (1229 A.D.), as noticed earlier, specifically states that the eight houses were to act under the aegis of the Mahāsabhai. Thus the position of the Yōgam appears to have been similar to that of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai of old.[25] But it is difficult to determine how long this relationship continued between the two institutions.

No doubt, for some centuries, the same position was, more or less, maintained. The inscription of 421 M.E. (1246 A.D.) records how the agreement between the donor and the managers regarding the gift was ratified by the 'great men of the assembly', and that it was at their command that the inscription itself was engraved.[26] The epigraph of 432 M.E. (1257 A.D.) registers an agreement regarding a gift between the Śrīkāryakkār (Yōgakkār) and the donor, but adds that the Sabhai was also an active party to the agreement. So late as 720 M.E. (1544 A.D.), a document, registering the appointment of an accountant of the temple treasury, was executed by the Sabhai, the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār and the

24. 'Administration Report of Travancore' for 1049 M.E., p. 98.

25. In other places of South India, too, where a new settlement of brahmins was superimposed on a more ancient community, the Sabhai (the assembly of brahmin settlers) and the Ūr (the general assembly of the village) co-existed See, for example, A. R. E 362 of 1902; 201 of 1907; 112 of 1914 and 123 of 1914. But, in Śucīndram, the assembly of Ūr, as such, never figures; it is the Mahāsabhai and the new Yōgam which existed side by side.

26. Appendix — Inscription No. 51.

other accountants, all acting as a body for the purpose The same procedure was adopted in the case of a similar appointment in 1549 A.D.[27]

SECTION 3. THE YŌGAKKĀR AT THE ZENITH OF THEIR POWER.

The decline of the Mahāsabhai : Though the formal position of the Mahāsabhai continued for a time as in days of old, yet, by degrees, it tended to become a mere ornamental body. There appears to have occurred a gradual shifting in the balance of power. Vital control over the temple was becoming more and more the monopoly of the close corporation of the Yōgakkār. The power over the purse, which the Yōgam acquired, served to enhance its authority and influence. In truth, it became the de facto governing institution, controlling the temple in every branch of its activities. A clear proof of this change is found in the inscriptions and in the palm-leaf records of the temple. The epigraphs between 432 M.E. and 720 M.E.—and they are a dozen in number—make absolutely no mention of the Mahāsabhai. Nor do the inscriptions after 724 M.E. refer to the Sabhai. They speak only of the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār or Śrībhaṇḍārakkāryam Ceyvār (controllers of the temple treasury), obviously, the body of Yōgakkār under different names. An exception to this is found in the inscription of 880 M.E. (1705 A.D.), in which, for the last time, the mention of the Sabhai (denoting the Mahāsabhai) figures. This feature suggests that the old Sabhai had become relegated to the background.

Negative evidence apart, the inscriptions, and more clearly the palm-leaf records, show that the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār alone constituted the powerful body. All transactions were made by this corporation. The collection of rents from the tenants, the supervision of the temple staff, the management of the endowments, the celebration of all the ceremonies, the conduct of the Kaimukku (the ordeal of ghee), in short, every activity of the temple, fell into the hands of the Yōgakkār. The Mahāsabhai of old had become virtually a relic of the past.

The increased powers of the Yōgakkār : The growing contact between the Yōgakkār of Śucīndram and of Trivandrum must have furnished an impetus for further increase of power. The records of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple furnish full details regarding the supreme powers wielded by the 'Eṭṭara Yōgam'. In Śucīndram, by the 16th century A.D. the authority of the Yōgam appears to have been fully

27. Appendix — Inscriptions Nos. 66 and 69.

entrenched. Drastic punishments of temple servants, stringent conditions imposed on tenants and penalties on visitors who infringed on rules of conduct in the temple, were all steadily on the increase. One of the palm-leaf records belonging to the 17th Puraṭṭāśi 736 M.E. (1560 A.D.) states that, since the paddy brought to the temple by a tenant, Kaṇṇan Ānandan, contained chaff, he was deprived of his tenancy. Again, on the 1st of Alpaśi of the same year, a cowherd who was alleged to have mixed water with the milk supplied to the temple was fined, and what was worse, he was given a thrashing by the Muṟayānpiḷḷai (the village servant). While these known instances savour of harshness, it must be remembered that, in the interest of efficient management, some degree of sternness was perhaps justified

Though there exists no document which throws light on the corrupt practices and vile greed of the overbearing Śrīkāryakkār, the enormous power enjoyed by them should have led to abuses. Nepotism and favouritism, with their attendant evils, must have appeared. Popular tradition contains vivid memories of certain high-handed acts on the part of the Yōgakkār.[28] Writing about the Yōgakkār of Trivandrum, Shankunny Menon states : " Its (Dēvasvam's) sole managers were the Yōgakkār, who had all the powers of despotic rulers over the Dēvasvam property and over every one of the tenants and holders of the Dēvasvam lands." Nagamiah confirms this view.[29] This position found in Trivandrum was apparently true of Śucīndram also. In these circumstances, the Mahāsabhai was completely eclipsed. It appears to have continued as a nominal body till the 18th century A.D. The latest reference to it pertains to the year 880 M.E. (1705 A.D.). There is no means of knowing whether or not it continued to exist till 987 M.E., in which year, the temple passed into the hands of the Government.

Beginnings of Royal interference : However, the overgrown power of the Yōgakkār was occasionally attempted to be checked by the Vēṇāḍ

28 An interesting incident, believed to have occurred in the 18th century A.D., is narrated by the local people. A Nāñcināḍ Vellāḷa old man of Tērūr took his seat for a time in the Tiruccuṟṟu Mandapa Noticed by one of the Yōgakkār, the offender was man-handled. On reaching Tērūr, he acquainted his friends of the experience. At once, a rising of the mob and threat to peace followed, but eventually, wiser counsel prevailed, and nothing untoward happened. This popular tradition has to be taken for what it is worth.

29. Shankunny Menon: History of Travancore, p. 97. Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol. I, p. 304

sovereigns. But, most of the kings before Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma of the 18th century A.D., were so much under the control of the Yōgakkār of Trivandrum that they did not, and could not, follow a consistent policy of curbing the trustees of the Śucīndram pagoda. At times, however, certain ambitious and masterly rulers did achieve some measure of success in combating the traditional rights of the Yōgakkār. The first remarkable instance of royal interference occurred in 720 M.E. (1544 A.D.) over the appointment of an accountant for the temple treasury. The inscription of Venṟumaṇkoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra Vīra Kērala Varma of the 27th Kārtikai 720 M.E. registers the fact that the king ordered the removal of the accountant of the treasury attached to the temple, and that he appointed one Dikkellāmpukaḻum perumāl from Karuṅguḍi-nāḍu.[30] It is significant that no reference is made to the authorities of the temple; and, it appears to have been an instance of wilful enforcement of royal power, flouting the authority of the Yōgakkār. Moreover, the tone of the royal communique as embodied in the inscription *'Paṇḍuḍayā-raiyum Paḻam pēraiyum tavirtu'*, appears to assume a sternness. Perhaps the Yōgakkār, had, by some act of theirs, incurred the ill-will of the king, and that was responsible for the step taken by him.

Fresh light is thrown on this matter by another inscription of the same king dated the 14th Mārkaḻi 720 M.E. (1544 A.D.)[31] This registers, as it were, the approval of the appointment of the accountant by the king, and the royal interference is given a constitutional form. The inscription states that the managers of the temple, the members of the Sabhai, together with the accountants, executed a Caṇḍēśvarapramāṇam to the effect that Uḍayānkuṭṭy Dikkellāmpukaḻum perumāl was appointed as an accountant of the sacred treasury. The epigraph, recording the royal order of appointment ('taravu' as it was called), is dated 27th Kārtikai, while the ratificatory document in the form of the Caṇḍēśvara-pramāṇam bears the date 14th Mārkaḻi of the same year. What accounts for this interval between the two inscriptions ? Normally, both should have been engraved on the same date. Further, as mentioned before, the earlier record does not contain any reference either to the Mahā-sabhai or to the Yōgam. Is it too much to infer that the royal order of appointment, ignoring the Yōgakkār, was resented by the latter, and that the king finally persuaded them to accept it ?

30. T.A.S., IV, p. 104.

31. T.A.S., VIII, pp. 1—2.

This tendency on the part of the monarchs to interfere in the management of the temple becomes more marked with the advance of time and with the increase in the royal power. An inscription of 880 M.E (1705 A.D.),[32] though incomplete, reveals sufficient details which indicate the steps undertaken by the government of the day to regulate and control the finances of the temple. The inscription registers the specific allocations of the temple's income among the various items of expenditure. The remarkable feature about this financial settlement is that, it was effected not merely by the Yōgakkār and the village Sabhai but also by the royal officers, the 'Svarūpams', all participating conjointly. The inscription goes on to state how the quantities of paddy needed for the daily and the special pūjās, for the various traditional ceremonies and for the Utsavas were specifically fixed. It adds how, at the same time, the annual dues from the lands under the control of the different Yōgakkār were ascertained. The amount of paddy to be furnished every instalment by the Yōgakkār, and the exact time at which it was to be brought and entrusted to the treasury, were also specified.

A significant fact revealed by the epigraph is that, sometime before 880 M.E. (1705 A.D.), the practice had come into vogue, of each Yōgakkār being individually entrusted with specified lands of the temple. From the earlier inscriptions, it is clear, that the lands owned by the pagoda were leased out to tenants by the Yōgakkār, acting as a body. It is not known when exactly the unsound practice of entrusting land to individual Ūrāṇmaikkār came to be adopted. Since the palm-leaf record of 736 M.E. (1560 A.D.) refers to the punishment of an individual tenant for the failure to furnish paddy of the proper quality, it is probable that the later practice was adopted sometime subsequent to 736 M.E. Perhaps, at first, the new system was introduced in the interest of efficient collection of the dues from the tenants. The change was probably found desirable when the lands under the control of the temple increased and when correspondingly the tenants became numerous.

Absentee Landlordism. Whatever the causes that prompted its adoption, there is no doubt that it led to unwholesome results in due course. Each member of the Yōgam became practically an independent landlord, with an establishment of clerks, tenants and servants, all working under him. It is needless to add that, in these circumstances, the worldly interests of these 'Śrīkāryam Ceyvār' loomed large. Moreover,

32. Appendix — Inscription No. 82

the Yōgakkār were not always residing in Śucīndram; they were often touring between their native villages, Trivandrum and Śucīndram. No wonder, the evils of absentee landlordism, accompanied by petty tyranny on the part of the managers and clerks, grew apace. Oppression and nepotism ensued. What Dewan Nanu Pillay says regarding the Ūrāṇmaikkār of the important temples in Travancore, was typical of the conditions prevalent in Śucīndram. He states : "As a rule, these jenmies rackrented and oppressed their tenants. The Dēvasvam landlords were so despotic as to levy even a poll-tax from a certain class of their tenants."[33] Writing about the assumption of the temples and their property by the State in 987 M.E., Sir T. Madhava Row writes thus : "This was a step certainly in the right direction, in so far as it had had a very beneficial influence on a great mass of landed property, which used to be mismanaged by the ignorance, caprice and short-sighted cupidity of the heads of the pagodas."[34]

Thus, the overgrown power of the Yōgakkār must have provoked the intervention of the ruler, resulting in the deputation of the 'Svarūpams' in 880 M.E. in order to investigate and settle the dues from the Ūrāṇmaikkār. The period of royal intervention, assuming a definite form in 880 M.E. (1705 A.D.), increased with the growth of the centralization of the government. Eventually, it led to the crippling of the authority of the Yōgakkār through the masterly policy adopted by Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma, the maker of modern Travancore.

SECTION 4. INCREASED ROYAL CONTROL — 1731 TO 1811 A.D.

Bāla Mārtaṇḍavarma's efforts to curb the Yōgakkār : The reign of Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma (1729-58 A.D.) marked a momentous epoch in the history of the principal temples in the State ; the pagoda at Śucīndram, too, received the impact of his reforming hand. A talented administrator and a far-sighted statesman, he realized that, side by side with fresh conquests, effective consolidation of the royal power was essential. He rightly diagnosed that the two forces in the State militating against the centralization of his authority were the semi-feudal baronage of the Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Piḷḷamār on the one hand and the overgrown religious organizations on the other. With characteristic firmness he tried to put down both these forces. Coupled with the desire to weaken the excessive power

33 Extract from Dewan Nanoo Pillay's "Sketch of the Progress of Travancore quoted in pp. 2 and 5 of the "Travancore Land Revenue Manual", Vol. IV.

34. Travancore Administration Report for 1038 M.E. (1862-63 A.D.) p. 55.

of the Yōgakkār of the great temples, was his eagerness to suppress corruption rampant among them, and incidentally, to enhance the revenue of the government. The growing problems of the enlarged State demanded more money and the temples appeared to be a fertile source to be tapped.

The arrogant behaviour of the Yōgakkār : At Śucīndram, however, it was the defiant attitude of the Ūrāṇmaikkār towards the king that precipitated his move. Local tradition, which, in parts at any rate, is corroborated by records, avers that Mārtāṇḍavarma received a serious affront at the hands of the Ūrāṇmaikkār within a few months of his accession to the throne. Towards the end of 904 M.E. (1729 A.D.), he came on a tour to Nāñcināḍ. He was camping at Kṛṣṇankōil, four miles north-west of Śucīndram. One evening, he intimated to the Ūrāṇmaikkār of Śucīndram his intention of visiting the temple that night. But, before he could reach the place, the hot-headed Ūrāṇmaikkār arranged to conclude the evening pūjā much sooner than usual, and had the doors of the temple closed. News of this move were at once taken to Mārtāṇḍavarma by some one anxious to win the royal favour. On hearing the report, the Mahārāja, wild with fury, ordered that before 12 noon the next day, the arrogant Ūrāṇmaikkār of Śucīndram were to be attacked and expelled, and their houses razed to the ground. It was Rāmayyan Daḷava, the king's loyal minister, who was commissioned with the task. Rāmayyan set out the next morning with a posse of troops. But, having got scent of the move, the Ūrāṇmaikkār had made good their escape. Without any difficulty, the Daḷava and party demolished the houses of all the Yōgakkār, except the Tekkumaṉ Maṭha. In the latter place, by chance, an old lady had been left behind. The popular version runs—and this is corroborated by the 'petition of the Tekkumaṉ Pōṟṟi' —that, tired after their exertions, Rāmayyan and his men finally reached Tekkuman Maṭha. The lady, however, was all kindness and solicitude for the party, and offered them food, which they readily partook.[35] Reluctant to harm the house that afforded him hospitality, Rāmayyan spared the Tekkumaṉ Maṭha. Returning triumphantly to Kṛṣṇankōil, he acquainted his royal master with a full account of all that had taken place in Śucīndram.

35. Even now there is found a rectangular stone slab, about 5 feet long and 3 feet broad, in the front courtyard of the Tekkuman Matha. It is believed that Rāmayyan Dalava had stretched himself on this slab, after partaking of the gruel (kañji) which was offered by the lady.

Appointment of Valiya Śrī Kāryakkār : Though, after a while, reconciliation was effected and the Ūrāṇmaikkār returned to Śucīndram, Mārtāṇḍavarma was bent upon reducing the overweening power of the Yōgakkār. His next move appeared in 906 M.E., within a couple of years of his accession. He ordered the appointment of a special officer entitled the Valiya Śrīkāryakkār in order to exercise a vigilant supervision over the affairs of the Śucīndram pagoda. The royal decree commanded that this special Śrīkāryakkār was to function in collaboration with the officer called Śrīkāryam, who was already holding office under the control of the Ūrāṇmaikkār.

Dual management. This important step taken by Mārtaṇḍavarma ushered in a period of partial control by the deputy of the government. It is but natural that this dual management gave room for a crop of disputes. Much unwholesome bickering ensued. The Ūrāṇmaikkār resented the interference of the State official with their vested interests and traditional rights. On several occasions, the ruler had to compel them to abide by the decision of the Valiya Śrīkāryakkār. However, it cannot be denied that, in spite of considerable inconvenience, this dual control reduced the scope of corruption and misappropriation. What was more, the creation of the new office had a psychological effect on the Ūrānmaikkār; it impressed on them the possibility of their power being reduced. From 906 to 987 M.E. (1731 to 1812 A.D.) this dual management continued.

Ācārakkaṇakku of 1741 A.D.: Not content with this move, Mārtāṇḍavarma took the equally decisive step of ordering the preparation of a catalogue of all the items of expenditure of the temple. This having been done, a close scrutiny and a thorough revision of the various items followed. Important and difficult as this work was, it was undertaken by a body of experts consisting of competent religious dignitaries and revenue officials of the State. The final result of the arduous labours of this committee was the publication in 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.) of what has been called 'Ācārakkaṇakku'. This exhaustive manual specifying the amount to be spent over each item was at once a valuable guide to the future and an instrument of check on the Ūrāṇmaikkār of the day. Little wonder, that the Yōgakkār roundly condemned the Ācārakkaṇakku. But, in reality, it was a carefully assessed and judicially determined estimate. It may be mentioned that it is in accordance with this list prepared in 916 M.E. that the expenditure on all the rites and ceremonies of the temple is regulated to this day.

Part of the landed property acquired on cōrā-oṟṟi: Masterly Mārtāṇḍavarma did not stop with these measures, far-reaching as they were. He aimed at depriving the Ūrāḷars (Yōgakkār) of their control over the vast landed property of the temple. His conviction was that, through several accidental circumstances in the past, the Yōgakkār had become jenmies or owners of the estates which really belonged to the temple. The far-sighted ruler realized that the sooner the anomaly was removed the better. But, a peremptory confiscation of the property by the government would have been, at that stage, too drastic and revolutionary a step. The vested interests acquired through centuries could not be brushed aside by a stroke of the pen. Hence, the shrewd ruler adopted an adroit method. He persuaded, and virtually coerced the Ūrālars to lease out a considerable part of the lands in their possession to the government. It is learnt from the Agastīśvaram Taluk record dated the 21st Alpaśi 921 M.E. (1745 A.D.) that a vast area of land, lying to the east of the river Paḻayār at Śucīndram, which belonged to the pagoda, was acquired by the Government on cōrā-oṟṟi (sub-mortgage) from the nine Ūrāṇmaikkār.[36]

After this was effected, a direct settlement was made with the tenants of the Yōgakkār. It is gratifying to note that the change brought welcome relief to the down-trodden tenants, because, the conditions of tenancy in respect of those lands were revised in such a manner as to prove more liberal than under the Ūrāḷar.[37] Not less interesting is the fact that the income from these lands was employed for the maintenance of a military garrison at Marungūr and Karuṅkuḷam as a defence against the dreaded incursions from the east. This diversion of the funds made a popular appeal, because Śucīndram and places in its neighbourhood were exposed to frequent attacks from beyond Āruvāymoḻi. Another portion of the income was utilized for the construction of the canal called

36. 'Travancore Land Revenue Manual', Vol. IV, p. 94.

37. The Tirattu (consolidated account) of 923 M.E. found in the 'Agastīśvaram Taluk Records' presents full details of the land revenue derived from Nāñcināḍ between 919 and 923 M.E. This account shows that lands were settled on lease (oṟṟi) for periods extending to 30 years and, in certain cases, even to 48 years Further, it furnishes details of expenditure concerning the construction of irrigation tanks and embankments connected with the North Puttanār scheme. See Travancore Land Revenue Manual', Vol. IV, pp. 95-96.

'Nāñcināḍ Puttanār', running from Bhūtappāṇdy to Cape Comorin[38] This productive irrigation work has helped paddy cultivation in Nāñcināḍ in no small measure.

Mārtāṇdavarma's aims : Though Mārtāṇḍavarma tried to curb the might of the Yōgakkār through several devices, he was by no means an atheist or scoffer at religion. Far from it. A pious and orthodox devotee, Mārtāṇḍavarma it was, who dedicated the State to Lord Padmanābha and ruled as His devout vassal. The measures adopted by him with the object of establishing a rigorous control over the Śucīndram pagoda were by no means prompted by any irreverence to religion. They were actuated only by the desire to check the mismanagement of the temple funds as well as to humble the arrogant Ūrāṇmaikkār and reduce their undue influence. The political motive of strengthening the income and power of the Government was, doubtless, another factor. But nothing was done by his zealous reforming hand, which affected adversely the age-long rites and ceremonies of the temple.

Benefactions to the temple : A token of his reverence for the pagoda is found in the royal firman or nīṭṭu of 923 M.E. (1748 A.D.) which registers his grant of eight acres of paddy land to the deity of Jvaradēvamūrty in the Śucīndram temple. Moreover, it was he who organized the Ūṭṭupura or the feeding house for brahmins at Śucīndram. He repaired and restored certain dilapidated structures in the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple of Śucīndram.[39] Besides, he performed several

38 The Grandhavari of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple contains the following statement :—

"920-ാമാണ്ടു് ശുചീന്ദ്രത്തു ആററിനു കിഴക്കുള്ള നിലങ്ങളും കരക്കാടും ശുചീന്ദ്രത്തു 9 പോററിമാരോടും ചോരാവൊററി എഴുതിവാങ്ങിച്ചു്.....പുത്തനായിട്ടു ആറുവെട്ടി കന്യാകുമാരി വരേയ്ക്കും ആററുവെള്ളം കൊണ്ടുവിട്ടു് നിലങ്ങളും കൃഷിചെയ്യിച്ചു് ആ വക നെല്ലുകൾ കേൾവിയിൽ നിന്നും മുതലും എടുത്തു തോവാള അഗസ്തീശ്വരം ഉൾപ്പെട്ട കോട്ടപ്പടിയിൽ കാവലായിട്ടു പാർക്കുന്ന കണ്ണുക്കൂട്ടം പുള്ളികൾ വക വെയ്ക്കയും ചെയ്തു."

39. In particular, Mārtāṇḍavarma, the dāsa (servant) of Padmanābha, repaired the shrine of Tekkēḍam, performed a purificatory ceremony there and bestowed gifts on brahmins. The Agastīśvaram Taluk Record dated 10th Kārtikai contains the following statement :—

"ശുചീന്ദ്രം പെരുമാൾ താണുമാലയപ്പെരുമാൾക്കു തെക്കേയിടം തെൻതിരുവെങ്കിടം വിണ്ണവരുംപെരുമാളുക്കു ഇളംകോവിൽ തിരുപ്പണിവകയ്ക്കും കലശം ദക്ഷിണവകയ്ക്കും ശുചീന്ദ്രം ആററിനു കിഴക്കു് വച്ചെഴുത്തു വകയിൽ നിന്നും ചിലവിട്ട...."

purificatory ceremonies, which were necessary on account of the desecration caused by Candā Sāhib in 915 M.E. (1740 A.D.).

It is interesting to learn how the ruler raised the money required for the above-mentioned services. The Agastīśvaram Taluk Record of the 10th Kārtikai 921 M.E. (1745 A.D.) reveals that the amount was secured by the imposition of renewal fees called Vacceḻuttu on the lands in Śucīndram lying east of Paḻayāṟ.[40] These lands, it will be remembered, were those taken on sub-mortgage from the Ūrāṇmaikkār. Though the record, mentioned above, does not furnish other details about the Vacceḻuttu, it appears that it represented a special registration fee levied on the tenants of these lands. The tenants were formerly holding the lands of the Yōgakkār, and now that the Government obtained the right over these lands, the tenancy had to be renewed, and it was in that connection that the fee was charged.

The question arises as to how the expenses connected with the daily services, the monthly ceremonies and the annual festivals were provided for, during the time of Mārtāṇḍavarma. It is by no means correct to assume that all the lands belonging to the temple were mortgaged to the Government. The records of 920 and 921 M.E. state that only the lands lying to the east of the river in Śucīndram were accepted on a sub-mortgage from the Ūrāṇmaikkār. Still, there were extensive lands owned by the temple, lying to the north, south and west of the river; these lands were in the possession of the Ūrāṇmaikkār. Under the dual system of management introduced by Mārtāṇḍavarma, the proceeds of these lands were used for the normal expenditure of the pagoda. Nevertheless, the lands left with the Yōgakkār were found inadequate to meet the various items of expenditure, even as fixed by the Ācārakkaṇakku of 916 M.E. Perhaps, the Yōgakkār, out of their ill-will towards Mārtāṇḍavarma, did not care to represent the matter to the ruler.

Kārtikai Tirunāḷ's reforms : Mārtāṇḍavarma's nephew and successor, Kārtikai Tirunāḷ felt the need for a more liberal provision. From the Śucīndram Temple Records, it is learnt that in 942 M.E. (1767 A.D.) a communication was received from the Government by the Valiya Śrīkāryakkār of Śucīndram to the effect, that the Añjali cess due to the Kēḷvis from Śucīndram was to be transferred to the temple towards its

40. 'Travancore Land Revenue Manual', Vol IV, p. 94.

daily expenses.[41] It is indisputable that a more amicable relationship was maintained with the Ūrānmaikkār by Kārtikai Tirunāl Mahārāja than by his predecessor. For one thing, time would have healed the sore; and for another, Kārtikai Tirunāḷ, more considerate to old traditions, was anxious to appease the Yōgakkār. The records of the temple show that the king visited the pagoda several times during his reign. As mentioned earlier, it was under the patronage of the same ruler that the construction of the Śrībalipura was undertaken.

Shortly after the generous gesture of 942 M.E. came another concession in 945 M.E. (1770 A.D.). In the resettlement of land revenue effected in the time of Mārtāṇḍavarma, the lands owned by the Śucīndram temple also had to pay their quota of tax to the Government. Doubtless, this demand was made in utter disregard of the conditions governing the endowments of land to the temple. But, Mārtāṇḍavarma's dealings with the Yōgakkār were effected in a spite, and hence, some of the legitimate exemptions enjoyed by the temple were denied. In 945 M.E., Kārtikai Tirunāl Mahārāja was pleased to order that the age-long remissions given to the lands of the pagoda were to be re-granted. It was, however, added that the remission should be sanctioned only on application to the Government by the authorities of the temple. Such applications were to be considered only after an inspection of the lands by a committee consisting of the accountants of the Kēḷvi (the sub-division of a Taluk) and the officers of the temple. The remissions were to be determined on the basis of the reports of the Committee. The details about this liberal gesture are learnt from the Śucīndram Records which contain a copy of the Śāsanam or communication sent to the Valiya Śrīkāryakkār dated 18th Māśi 945 M.E. (1770 A.D.).[42]

Bāla Rāma Varma's weak reign : The reign of the ruler Bāla Rāma Varma (973-986 M.E. = 1798 — 1811 A.D.) which witnessed a set-back in several directions, affected adversely the Śucīndram temple, too. The young and indiscreet ruler was surrounded by intriguing favourites, who had absolutely no concern either for the people or for the Dēvasvams. Raising more money for the Government appeared to be the sole aim of the ruler. From the Accounts of the Agastīśvaram Taluk,

41. Ibid, p. 124.
42. Ibid, p. 127.

it is learnt that a new levy was imposed on the lands of the Śucīndram temple. A part of the dry lands owned by the pagoda had been converted into wet lands, thanks to the irrigation project of Puttanār. Now, under Bāla Rāma Varma, those reclaimed lands were charged a tax at the rate of 10 fanams (about a Rupee and a half) per kōṭṭa of land i.e., per unit having the sowing capacity of one kōṭṭa of paddy. True, they were treated with consideration as Paṇḍārappāṭṭam lands ;[43] and hence, in comparison with that on other lands, the levy was nominal. Nevertheless, the imposition of the tax clearly marked a change of attitude, and was opposed to the policy of total remissions sanctioned by the royal order of 18th Māśi 945 M.E.

Vēlu Tampy's Scheme : Vēlu Tampy, who was the minister between 1801 and 1809 A.D., wished to adopt a new policy towards the temples. Gifted with a virile intellect and a spirit of independence, Vēlu Tampy developed bold plans for re-constructing the administration. He believed that the huge wealth owned by the Dēvasvams and the great influence that the trustees of Dēvasvams had over the people, were potential sources of danger to the State. One of his startling plans was that the entire property of the temples should be confiscated by the Government. But Daḷavā Vēlu Tampy was not destined to give effect to his far-reaching projects. He quarelled with Col. Macaulay, the British Resident, over the question of remitting the arrears to the East India Company. Eventually, matters took such a turn that Vēlu Tampy, apprehending personal humiliation, killed himself. However, Vēlu Tampy's ideas were not lost upon one of his successors in office.

Colonel Munro and the temples : Colonel Munro, the Resident, who became also the Dewan of the State in 1811 A.D., took up the project in earnest. Realizing full well that the establishment of governmental control over the temples was an urgently needed reform, he ordered in 987 M.E., (1812 A.D.), with the approval of the ruling queen, Rāni Lakṣmi Bāi, the assumption by the Government of 348 of the more important temples and 1171 minor ones, along with their entire property, movable and immovable. In the royal order, dated 18th Tulām 987 M.E., the Government clearly explained the need for this drastic step. The mismanagement of the temples and their property by the Ūrāḷars

43. 'Paṇḍārappāttam' is the term applied to the levy on lands of the temples. The levy was based on a low nominal rate. Paṇḍāram denoted the treasury of temples.

which necessitated this drastic action on the part of the Government are vividly described.[44]

The assumption of the Dēvəsvams immediately brought to the State property yielding a total annual income of Rupees 4 lakhs. The Śucīndram pagoda was one of the major temples taken over by the State by the proclamation of 18th Tulām 987 M.E. The property of the Śucīndram temple was expected to yield roughly an annual rental of Rs. 38,350 , but this figure did not include the income from the lands already mortgaged to the Sırkār ın 921 M.E. Besides, over and above the rental income, the Government secured control over other sources as well, which, though irregular and fortuitous, were, none the less, considerable. Among these the principal sources were (a) succession fees (aḍiyara) levied on the employees of the temple, like the Śāntıkkār or the officiating priests, (b) gifts received in coin and (c) proceeds from the sale of the cooked food after having been offered to the deities.

This momentous step taken by Colonel Munro was followed by a thorough change in the administration of the temple. The anomalous dual system of management at Śucīndram was terminated. In 987 M.E. (1812 A.D.) itself, a body of Government Officers was appointed to be in immediate charge of the Śucīndram temple. This body included one Śrīkāryam, an officer of fairly high rank, ə Manager and four clerks. The whole group was to work under the control of the District Revenue Officers, who were directed to supervize the administration of the pagoda. Strict control was enforced over the staff of the temple in order to guard against corruption and mismanagement But the Government, while keen on effecting economy, was anxious to see that the various ceremonies were conducted in the proper manner sanctified by age-long custom. The ruler was scrupulously careful to make adequate provision for the conduct of all the rites, ceremonies and festivals. It was expressly

44. Order No. 139 dated 18th Tulām 987 M.E. (Huzur Central Vernacular Records)

"ദേവസ്വങ്ങളിൽ യാതൊരു അന്വേഷണവും സൂക്ഷ്മവും ഇല്ലാത്ത കാരണത്തിനാൽ വ്യാജങ്ങളും, വ്യത്യാസങ്ങളും, കടിശ്ശിഖയും, ചുമതലയും, ക്ഷേത്രം പണികഴിപ്പിക്കാതെയും, തിരുവാഭരണം മുതലായതു വ്യാജവും വ്യത്യാസമായിട്ടും നടന്നുവരുന്നു. അതു കാരണമായിട്ട് ദേവസ്വങ്ങളിൽ ഉള്ള നിലവും പുരയിടവും അതാതു മണ്ഡപത്തുംവാതുക്കലുകളിൽ ചേർത്ത് ദേവസ്വകാര്യം മണ്ഡപത്തുംവാതുക്കൽ കാര്യക്കാരന്മാർ വിചാരിച്ചുകൊള്ളത്തക്കവണ്ണം നാം ഉത്തരവ് കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നു."

laid down that the Sirkār had absolutely no intention of curtailing the existing pativus, i.e., the customary items of expenditure.

Revision of the items of expenditure : This laudable object is evident from the appointment of a committee of experts in 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.) by Colonel Munro for fixing the items of legitimate expenditure. This committee was composed of six officials and four non-officials who were learned brahmins, three of whom were themselves Yōgakkār of prominent temples. The Committee was instructed to fix all the items of expenditure of the temples which had been taken over by the State. In unmistakable terms they were told that prevention of wastage and corruption, and not parsimony was the aim of the Government.[45] The Committee submitted its report after an exhaustive study of the entire question. The recommendations of the experts were adopted, and, all possible opportunities of undue exactions and corrupt dealings on the part of the temple officials were reduced.

One of the important documents found among the Agastīśvaram Taluk Records deals with the Accounts of the Śucīndram pagoda pertaining to the year 987 M.E. (1811-12 A.D.). It furnishes full details regarding the assumption of the Dēvasvam property by the Sirkār and the provision made for the conduct of the pūjās, the rituals, ceremonies and festivals in the temple. Besides, the record gives an account of the arrangements made for the supply of the paddy and money required under the specific heads of expenditure. The Revenue authorities of the Agastīśvaram Taluk were to receive the necessary amounts from the Huzur Cutchery, the Major Treasury, and to disburse them to the officers of the temple.[46] Instructions for the collection of the proceeds were also laid down. It was enacted that all the dues from the Dēvasvam property were to be collected by the Government officials. Colonel Munro's order, dated 14th Makaram 987 M.E. (1812 A.D.), directed the Kāriyakkār and Provertikārs (revenue officers) of the various Maṇḍapattumvātukkals (Taluks) to collect the income from the Dēvasvam property within

45, നമ്മുടെ അഭിപ്രായം ഇരിക്കുന്നതു എന്തെന്നാൽ അതാതു ദേവസ്വങ്ങളിൽ പതിവായിട്ടു നടന്നുവരുന്ന പൂജ അടിയന്തിരങ്ങൾ ആദിയായിട്ടുള്ളതൊക്കെയും വേണ്ടും പ്രകാരം വിശേഷമായി നടക്കണമെന്നും, നടത്തിക്കണമെന്നും ദേവസ്വങ്ങളിലെ പണികളും ചെയ്യിച്ചു വേണ്ടും പ്രകാരം സൂക്ഷിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നും അത്രെ ആകുന്നു."

(Huzur Central Vernacular Records).

46. See 'Travancore Land Revenue Manual', Vol. IV, p. 214.

their jurisdiction. The collections, thus made, instead of being taken to the coffers of the temple, were credited to the State Treasury.

Remission of arrears: A stage of transition is usually a difficult period, and gives rise to certain hardships and losses. The change of management with regard to the temples and their property was bound to create several problems. The Travancore Government was not unmindful of such difficulties, and therefore, care was taken to mitigate the rigours of the transition. A Government Proclamation, dated 3rd Mīnam 987 M.E. (1812 A.D.), states that the arrears of revenue, due on the Dēvasvam (temple) lands up to 983 M.E. (1808 A.D.), were remitted as a concession to the ryots. Doubtless, this act of grace entailed a substantial loss of income to the Sirkār. But, it is stated that the arrears had accumulated owing to the laxity of management, and that if the Government insisted upon the collection of the heavy arrears, the ryots would have found it too severe a hardship. It is in view of this situation, that the Sirkār magnanimously refrained from insisting upon the exaction of the dues. All arrears up to 983 M.E. were remitted; the proclamation, however, laid down that the ryots were to pay the land revenue regularly from 984 M.E. onwards.[47]

SECTION 5. MANAGEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT SINCE 1811 A.D.

The position of the Yōgakkār after 1811 A.D.: In the history of the Śucīndram pagoda, no less than in that of the other important temples of Travancore, the year 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.) constitutes a prominent landmark. The rule of the Yōgakkār was ended. The temple became a State-managed institution. The Revenue officials of the Agastīśvaram Taluk, and over them, those of the Padmanābhapuram Division, and at the very top, the Central Government under the Mahārāja and his Dewan, exercised control over the Śucīndram Temple. It would be interesting to ascertain how exactly the position and privileges of the Yōgakkār were affected by the new scheme. Doubtless, the assumption of all the property and the management of the temple meant a colossal reduction in the power of the Yōgakkār. The control they had exercised over a host of tenants and numerous members of the temple staff was now a thing of the past. Most of the Yōgakkār, unable to reconcile themselves with their altered position, permanently settled in their native villages in Central or North Travancore. They visited Śucīndram only on rare occasions when their presence was absolutely needed. The members of two houses alone, namely of Tekkumaṇ Maṭha and of Kūttanpaḷḷi, con-

47 Ibid. p. 213.

tinued to reside in Śucīndram. Even among these, the members of the Kūttanpaḷḷi house left the village in 1901 A.D.

But, it is by no means true that in 987 M.E. the Yōgakkār were deprived of all the rights and privileges in the temple. They were still granted their age-long pativu or customary shares in the food and the delicacies offered to the deities, certain special privileges and money payments for their participation in the various ceremonies and festivals. Moreover, the Yōgakkār were still associated with the ceremonies of the temple. Particularly, in connection with the annual Utsavas, events like the Dhvajārōhaṇam, the Ōmkārabali, and the Paḷḷivēṭṭai should not be celebrated except in their presence and under their immediate supervision. The occasional ceremonies of renovation and purification, like Aṣṭabandhakalaśam (re-fixing of images) dhvajapratiṣṭha (re-fixing of the flag staff) were also performed under their guidance. Whenever the Kaimukku ordeal was held in the temple between 987 M.E. and 1042 M.E. all the Yōgakkār were expected to be present for the conduct of the ordeal. Moreover, such of the Yōgakkār who were available in Śucīndram at the time, were requested to be present on occasions when the costly jewels of the pagoda were taken out of the coffers and when they were subsequently replaced. In fact, until so recently as 1911 A.D. the jewels could be taken out only in the presence of at least three Yōgakkār.[48] Even in respect of the daily ceremonies of the temple, the Government took care to request the Yōgakkār to maintain a general supervision. Any case of failure to observe the time-honoured traditions was expected to be reported by them to the Government. A record found at the Tekkumaṇ Maṭha refers to the dismissal of a Manager of the pagoda in 1012 M.E. (1837 A.D.) on the complaint preferred to the Government by the then Pōṟṟi of Tekkuman Maṭha that the quantity of the daily offerings was found, on certain days, to have been less than the fixed quota.

48 It is stated that, in connection with the Cittirai Utsava of the year 1906 A.D., the Yōgakkār failed to arrive in time for the jewels to be taken out. Some of the members were out of station and they did not arrive in time. The exigency called for immediate action. The Mahārāja, Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl, authorized the jewels to be taken out. The control over the jewels of the temple was removed from their hands since that date. Among proposals for transferring the control over jewels, the Revenue authorities suggested in 1907 A.D. that the entire chest of jewels might be removed to the Taluk Treasury at Nagercoil. Upon the opposition raised against this proposal by the Tantri and the Yōgakkār, a special Tiruvābharanappura was constructed on a wing of the Nātakaśāla, where jewels are preserved. Now, the taking out or the replacing of the jewels is done only in the presence of the Dēvasvam Superintendent, the Manager and the Vattappalli Sthānikar.

But, even these formal powers finally slipped out of their hands after the establishment of the Dēvasvam Department in 1922 A.D. Now the Yōgakkār, or rather the descendants of the once dominant Yōgakkār, have neither the substance nor the shadow of their old powers. Only, when those members are present in Śucīndram, a share of the cooked rice and the delicacies is sent to them. This is all that survives of their past glory.

Drawbacks of Government management : Resuming the history of the management subsequent to 987 M.E (1812 A.D.), we find that the change of control from the Yōgakkār to the Revenue authorities did not prove an unmixed blessing. At any rate, over the major part of the period from 1812 to 1922 A.D., certain defects in administration persisted. True, the tenants of the lands were treated better, and were freed from minor exactions or oppressions. The temple staff, too, received a better treatment at the hands of the Government officials. But, with all that, it is doubtful whether the efficiency of the temple's administration had improved.

As the Revenue officials were overworked, they could hardly find enough time to exercise an effective supervision over the temple. With multifarious executive and magisterial duties making heavy demands on their time, the Tahsildars, and still more the Division Peishkars, found it increasingly difficult to devote the required attention to the management of the Śucīndram and other Dēvasvams The records of the Government furnish unmistakable evidence of it A Government circular issued on 1st Idavam 1027 M E. (1852 A.D.) complains that the Accounts of the temples were not regularly audited by the Tahsildars.[49] Moreover, the Government had to repeatedly address admonitions to the District or Division Peishkars that their visits of inspection to the different places, committed to their charge, were far fewer than expected.[50]

As a result of inadequate supervision of the Śucīndram temple by the Revenue Officers, the Śrīkāryakkāran (the Manager of the temple)

49. See Regulations and Circular Orders by T. Rama Row, pp. 27-28
"പ്രവൃത്തികളിലും മററും മുതൽ ചുമതലയ്ക്കു ആക്കിയിരിക്കുന്ന ചന്തിരക്കാരന്മാർ മുതലായ ആളുകളുടെ കൈക്കണക്കുകൾ ഉടനടൻ തീർപ്പിക്കാത്തതിനാൽ അവരുടെ പേരിൽ അധികം ചുമതലയ്ക്കു് ഇടവന്നിരിക്കകൊണ്ടു്..."

50 See Travancore Government Gazette dated 1st Mēḍam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D.) dated 30th Tulām 1065 M.E. (1889 A.D.) and for Huzur Sādhana dated 13th Kumbham 1070 M.E. (1895 A.D.) (Land Revenue Manual, V, p. 1030).

became practically the local despot of the pagoda. The minor officials, working under the Śrīkāryakkār, proved to be petty tyrants in their turn. Local tradition preserves vivid memories of their corruption and waywardness. The Revenue Officials themselves, at times, winked at irregularities. This scandalous state of affairs roused public attention. Dewan Nanoo Pillay, writing about conditions in the middle of the 19th century A.D., states thus : " The Tahsildars and their undertrappers in the up-country who bought their appointments in the headquarter market made no scruple in recouping their losses in way of the prices of their offices by merciless exactions. "[51] The inefficient supervision and the consequent mismanagement regarding temple affairs found expression in the Legislative Councils since 1888 A.D. So late as 1907 A.D. legislators drew attention to the abuses in temple administration. One member represented that " the Tahsildars had no time even to think about the mismanagement of Dēvasvams, much less to remedy it " In the same session of the Legislature, another speaker said that pūjās were not regularly performed in the Sirkār temples, many of which were themselves in utter disrepair.[52] It is significant to note that the member representing Nāñcināḍ associated himself with the above criticism.

But the short-comings should not be exaggerated. For one thing, concerning this period we have more information than about the earlier years. With the increased scope of communication, the smallest blot received wide publicity. Moreover, high expectations were always held of institutions which came under Government control. Making allowance for these circumstances, it may be observed that in spite of a few defects, the administration of temples was not more unsound than during the period of the Ūrālars.

The agitation for a separate Department : However, public agitation on the question of abuses in temples gathered momentum. Side by side with this agitation, there appeared a desire on the part of the non-Hindu subjects of the State to enter the service of the Revenue Department. So long as the control of the temples remained in the Revenue Department, non-Hindus were shut out from this branch of public service. As an example of the new move may be quoted the speech of a legislator in 1907 A.D. Mr. Idichandy, member for Māvēlikkara, remarked :[53] " The

51. Nagamiah : State Manual, Vol. III, p. 385.

52 Proceedings of the 3rd meeting of the Śrī Mūlam Popular Assembly of 1907, p. 115.

53. Ibid. p. 118.

combination of Revenue and Dēvasvam duties in one and the same officer is indefensible in principle and injurious in operation"; and, he urged for the early separation of the Departments and the appointment of a Commissioner in sole charge of the Dēvasvams.

The Ramachandra Rao Committee: In order to investigate the problems raised in the Legislature, the Government appointed in 1920 A.D. the Ramachandra Rao Committee, consisting of three officials and two non-officials The terms of reference to the Committee included the consideration of schemes which would at once secure a more efficient management of the State temples and afford scope for the employment of non-Hindus in the Revenue and Magisterial Departments. The Committee unanimously recommended the formation of a separate Department for the administration of the Dēvasvams. Acting upon their recommendation, the Government issued a Proclamation announcing the creation of a separate Dēvasvam Department with effect from 1st Ciṅgam 1098 M.E. (August 1922 A.D.).

The Dēvasvam Department: The establishment of the Dēvasvam Department marks an epoch in the history of the management of the Śucīndram temple. The staff of officers for the administration of the pagoda was increased; the machinery of supervision was enlarged; and, the total effect of the reform has been found satisfactory. At the apex of the new Department is the Dēvasvam Commissioner, who, until 1939, was the senior-most official in the State, next in rank only to the Dewan. Over each of the Divisions, which roughly coincide with the Revenue units, is an Assistant Commissioner, under whom there are the Group Superintendents, each in charge of a Group, having a number of temples within its range. Important Dēvasvams like that of Śucīndram, has a Manager, assisted by seven clerks. A Group Superintendent has Śucīndram as his headquarters, and his office, manned by nearly twenty clerks, is also located here.

The Proclamation laid down that the first charge on the land revenue should be the expenditure on the Dēvasvams. It was fixed that, out of the recurring land revenue, 40%, which amounts to about Rs. 16 lakhs, are to be set apart for the maintenance of the State temples. Normally, only a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs is spent on the daily, monthly and annual ceremonies in all the temples together. Another sum of Rs. 2 lakhs is utilized for repairs, leaving thus a balance of about Rs. 4 lakhs out of the amount allocated for the Dēvasavams. The residue was purposely provided for, in order to build up a Reserve Fund. This far-sighted move

was initiated by the pious ruler Śrī Mūlam Tirunāḷ, in whose reign the new Dēvasvam Department was created. The noble idea of the far-sighted Mahārāja was that, when the Reserve Fund accumulates to an appreciable amount, property may be purchased and settled on the various temples. This step was taken with a view to providing compensation for the appropriation of the temple property, effected in 1811 A.D.

Revisions after 1811 A D : So far as the Śucīndram pagoda is concerned, after the Government assumed the control in 1811 A.D., there have been two important revisions in the total amount sanctioned for expenses. The Committee set up by Colonel Munro completed its labours in 994 M E. (1819 A.D.), and by the revision effected on that date, the Śucīndram temple was empowered to spend Rs. 32, 851 annually, excluding the amount set apart for the Ūṭṭupura. From 994 M.E., down to the 1st Mithunam 1110 M.E., (June 1935 A D) no change in the allotment was introduced. On the latter date, a total revision was effected and the annual expenditure on the temple was fixed at Rs. 99,930. It must be remembered, that this figure, which is over three times that of 1819 A.D. is accounted for, not only by reason of the increase in certain items of expenditure particularly connected with the Utsavas, but also by the fact that between the two dates, there has been a phenomenal rise in the level of prices.

Recently, after the second World War, a drastic reduction of Rs 40,000 out of the amount fixed in 1935 A.D., was effected. Many items of expenditure connected with the festivals, like bonfire and musical concerts, have been either suspended or reduced. Even in the matter of daily services, the oil supplied for the rows of lamps in the different parts of the temple has been limited.

Subsequent to the integration of Travancore and Cochin in 1949, certain important changes have occurred in the administration of temples, including that of Śucīndram. In 1950, a Dēvasvam Board has been constituted, consisting of three members. All the three are non-officials, one of whom is nominated by the Rājapramukh, one by the Government, while the third member is elected by the Hindu representatives in the Legislature. The supreme control over the temples is vested in this Board, though for purposes of routine administration, the old machinery consisting of the Dēvasvam Commissioner and the hierarchy of officials subordinate to him continue to function. The general policy of the Board so far has been to reduce as much as possible the expenditure on certain festivals and to promote religious education with the aid of money thus saved.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUNCTIONARIES

An historical survey of the management of the temple will not be complete without a study of the functionaries of the institution. From the very beginning, a staff of attendants was engaged in its service. With the advance of time and the growth of the pagoda, naturally, the temple 'parivāram' or establishment increased in size and importance. Those connected with the inner service of the shrines, and others engaged in equipping the various requirements of the institution became numerous.

A study of the functionaries of the temple may best be made, by classifying them under three heads: (1) those engaged in the purely spiritual service like conducting the worship, chanting mantras, or reciting sacred hymns; (2) those employed in the administration of all matters pertaining to the pagoda like the supervision over the staff and maintenance of the Accounts of the temple; and (3) those appointed to render various kinds of manual labour in connection with the temple, like the making of garlands and cleaning of vessels.

Before proceeding to consider the duties and rights of the different classes of employees, certain general observations may be made regarding their conditions of tenure and remuneration. Most of the functionaries, coming under the first two divisions noticed above, hold their position by the 'Kārāṇmai' tenure. This type of tenure denotes a permanent right to render a particular service in the temple. So long as the specified service is rendered satisfactorily, a Kārāṇmai holder is not to be evicted from his position. Besides, the majority of the Kārāṇmai holders enjoy a hereditary right to their office.

A common method of remunerating the Kāraṇmai holder in the past, was that of providing him with a particular plot of land. He could cultivate the land and enjoy its proceeds. He was but a mortgagee and not the owner of the land assigned to him; nor did he have any right of alienating the plot of land. However, some Kārāṇmai-holders like the Śāntikkār were directly paid a remuneration in paddy. Others, not employed on the basis of Kārāṇmai, viz., those who were appointed to discharge any specific piece of work, were also given their remuneration in the shape of paddy. The question of introducing a money payment in place of paddy engaged the attention of the Government since 1839 A.D. Trying first a partial conversion, the Government finally, by 1888 A.D., established a complete system of monetary remuneration.

SECTION 1. THE SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONARIES

1. *The Tantri*[1] *:* The highest spiritual head of the temple is the Tarunanallūr Nambūdiripāḍ, who belongs to an ancient and leading Nambūdiri family. His office is hereditary. The eldest living man of the family is the dignitary who holds the position. No record is available which indicates the date when the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiri was appointed the Tantri for the first time in the Śucīndram temple. One thing is clear. The office of Tantri at Śucīndram arose only after the advent of the Malayāḷi brahmins. Tantram, as a specially developed code of the rites and ceremonies of the temple, is a distinctive product of the West Coast. Though the 'Tantrasamuccaya' and the Īśānagurudēva paddhati', which, the Tantris of the West Coast mainly follow, are not fundamentally different from the Āgamas, the creation of a specific school of practices to be followed in temples is essentially an achievement of the Nambūdiri ritualists.

Thus, the Tantri of the Śucīndram temple must have originally appeared only in or subsequent to the 12th century A.D. As observed earlier, between 391 and 406 M.E. (1216 and 1231 A.D.), one Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar, who was evidently a Nambūdiri Svāmiyār, played a leading part in the deliberations of the Mahāsabhai. He is known to have acted under the authority of the 'great Tiruvaḍi' at Trivandrum,

1. The word 'Tantra' literally means an 'easy method'. Tantric rules, though arranged and amplified in later times, have their roots in the Vēdas and the Brāhmanās. A Tantri is an accredited exponent of Tantric rules on all spiritual matters including the methods of worship.

the Nambūdiri Svāmiyār of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple. Perhaps, the office of Tantri at Śucīndram started with Gōvinda prajña.

It is not known who his successor was. Popular tradition holds that, originally the Tantram was in the hands of the Nelvēli family (one of the Yōgakkār) and that, when the latter was in pecuniary difficulties, he sold the right of Tantram to the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiripād. It is not possible to ascertain how far this tradition is dependable. But there is unimpeachable evidence to show that, as early as the 13th century A.D., a Tarunanallūr Nambūdiri was associated with the Śucīndram temple. The Vāhanappura inscription of 413 M E. (1238 A.D) furnishes the datum that the ceremony of purification in connection with the reconstruction of certain porches was performed by the Taruṇanallūr Nambi This suggests that, in or before 1238 A D., the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiri had become the Tantri or master of ceremonies in the temple.

It is interesting to observe that the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiri is the Tantri in the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple at Śucīndram as well as in the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum. On all rules pertaining to the religious activities of both these pagodas he is the final authority. During the important festivals, like "Kaḷabham" and "Aṣṭabandha Kalaśam", he comes to Śucīndram and stays in the place Only in the event of his inability to be present, he sends a duly authorized deputy to officiate for him. Besides, there resides permanently at Śucīndram, a Brahmin assistant of the Tantri, called 'Mēlkaṅkāṇakkanakku'. He is the local representative of the Tantri, and is immediately in charge of the rules and traditional prescriptions regarding the rites and ceremonies, on behalf of the Nambūdiripāḍ. It is of great significance that the 'Mēlkaṅkāṇakkaṇakku' is a Tamil Brahmin belonging to Śucīndram. The presumption is that he interprets to the Nambūdiri the age-old Tamiḻian traditions of the temple. It looks as if this institution embodies the relic of the tacit agreement between the ancient village organization of Śucīndram and the new Malayāḷi functionaries appointed originally by the Vēnāḍ ruler.

The Tantri is paid Rs. 6000/- per annum (besides several customary dues from the temples) as renumeration for his service in both the Trivandrum and Śucīndram temples. The 'Mēḷkaṅkāṇakkaṇakku' was paid Rs. 2-7-0 a month prior to 1935 A.D. and is paid Rs. 14/- since then.

(2) *Mēl-Śāntikkār:* The officiating priests who conduct the worship in the inner shrines of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam are the chief

arcakas called Mēl-Śāntikkār. Only Nambūdiris of the villages of Iruññālakkuḍa, Peruvanam and Śukapuram are entitled to be employed as Mēl-Śāntikkār in the Śucīndram pagoda. Always four Mēl-Śāntikkār are available at the place, though only two officiate as priests every day, one at Vaḍakkēḍam and another at Tekkēḍam. The two priests alternate their services in the two shrines every other day.

In respect of these Nambūdiris, the right of performing the pūjā is based upon an ancient Kārāṇmai. However, no document is available which specifies the date when the agreement was originally effected. A Kaimukku record of 802 M.E (1627 A.D.) speaks of the Nambūdiri arcaka of the main shrine. The record which refers to the origin of the Aṛamvaḷattamman Kōil reveals that in 619 M.E. (1444 A.D.) a Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiri was appointed for that shrine.[2] Belonging to a still earlier period is the inscription of 406 M.E. (1230 A.D.) which throws some light on the matter. It states that the right of appointing the Śāntikkār in the Dvārakai Emperumān temple was entrusted to Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar. The inscription adds that after the time of Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar, the great Bhaṭāra Tiruvaḍi at Trivandrum was to appoint the Śāntikkār. Thus, this epigraph shows that, about 406 M.E. (1230 A.D.) the śānti (performance of pūjā) in the Dvārakai Emperumān temple was entrusted to a West Coast brahmin, very probably a Nambūdiri. It seems likely that, not far later than this date, Nambūdiri arcakas were appointed for the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple as well. At present, each Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiri is paid Rs. 34-8-0, besides free rations ; before 1935 A.D., he was paid Rs. 14/- and rations.

(3) *Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis :* The term 'Kīḻ-Śāntikkār' literally means subordinate officiating priests. Their duty is to cook the Neivēdyam, to furnish the Mēl-Śāntikkār with water for bathing the image and hand over to them the vessel containing the live charcoal on which incense is burnt. In respect of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam of the Śucīndram temple, this service is rendered by Vaṭṭappaḷḷi's assistant, the Turakkār.[3] But the Kīḻ-Śāntikkār, as understood in Śucīndram, also denote those who perform the pūjā in several minor shrines of the pagoda. In the Kailāsattu Mahādēva shrine, the Rāmasvāmy Kōil, the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy, the Aṛamvaḷattamman, the Kāla Bhairava, the Mākkāḷai and the Jayantīśvarattu shrines, the śānti is conducted by Pōṟṟis, commonly described as the Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis.

2. See Appendix No. 1.
3. See Infra — No. 5 of Section 1, Chapter VII

The term Pōṟṟi is a Tamiḻ word signifying reverence, and is used to designate certain groups of Malayāḷi brahmins other than Nambūdiris. But the Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis of Śucīndram are Tulu brahmins, whose ancestors were early immigrants into Travancore from the Canarese country. In respect of manners and customs, the Pōṟṟis are not distinguishable from the Nambūdiris; in recent times, there has appeared an increasing fusion between the two classes. A large number of these Tulu Pōṟṟis is found employed in the service of the various temples in Travancore. They seem to have been appointed as Kīḻ-Śāntikkār in the Śucīndram pagoda from about the 13th century A.D., when the Ūrāṇmaikkār appeared on the scene. At present, 15 Pōṟṟis are engaged in Kīḻ-Śānti service every day. Performing pūjā in the minor shrines noticed above, attending to the cooking and preparation of Neivēdyams (the oblations consisting of cooked rice, puddings, etc.) for certain shrines and preparing the sandal paste required for use in the temple, form their principal duties. Each one of them is paid a monthly remuneration of Rs. 15/-. The 15 Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis are chosen every month from about 50 families, now resident in various parts of Travancore. It is interesting to learn that the Pōṟṟis themselves select the 15 members for service at Śucīndram each month. The privileges of these Pōṟṟis, too, are governed by hereditary Kārāṇmai right.

(4) *Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar:* This hereditary dignitary is the formal managing trustee of the rites and ceremonies of the temple. Permanently residing in Śucīndram, he is the tantri and the Sthānikar who directly regulates all the affairs of daily routine, although his duties are performed under the authority of the master Tantri of the pagoda, the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiripāḍ. The rites and observances connected with the Dhvajārōhaṇam or flag-hoisting ceremony and the processions of the images during the Utsavas are all conducted by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar. It is the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi who is authorized to preserve the keys of all the shrines in his custody; hence, he is described as "Śrī Kōviluḍaiya Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar". He is, in addition, the principal custodian of the jewels, the vessels and other movable property owned by the pagoda. Besides, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar is the śāntikkāran or the officiating priest in the Sabhāpati, Cēravātal Śāsta, Kaṅkāḷanāthar, Śrī Cakram, Śucīndaperumāḷ and Dēvēndra Vināyakar shrines as well as for the Sākṣi Vināyakar image. For performing this and other odd items of service, the Sthānikar is empowered to appoint seven assistants called the 'Turakkār'. Moreover, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi

Sthānikar is the 'Avarōdha Kartā', viz., the officiant who initiates any priest in the service of the inner shrine, in respect of the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiripāḍ himself, of the Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiris, Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis and of the Turakkār Mūsads. Doubtless, this indicates on the one hand the important position of the Vaṭṭappalli, and on the other, the early date at which he should have become associated with the Śucīndram temple.

It would be interesting to know what the name Vaṭṭappaḷḷi signifies. 'Paḷḷi' denotes temple; and, one of the meanings of the Malayāḷam word 'Vaṭṭam' is 'arrangement' or 'preparation.'[4] Vaṭṭappaḷḷi, therefore, seems to denote one entrusted with the equipment of the requirements of the temple. The palm-leaf records, particularly those pertaining to the conduct of the Pratyayam, suggest that his functions accord with the above interpretation.

Concerning the question as to when the Vaṭṭappalli was first enlisted in the service of the Śucīndram temple, it must be observed that the earliest inscription which mentions the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi, under the name 'Śucīndravādi Kēśavan', is that of 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.).[5] The Ācārakkaṇakku of 862 M.E. (1686 A.D.) and that of 906 M.E. (1730 A.D.) also speak of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi in connection with the ceremonies of the temple. But the fact that the mention of this dignitary is found only in the later records does not by any means prove that he appeared late in the history of the temple. On the other hand, a palm-leaf record pertaining to an early period, as noticed before, throws light on the matter. This document is, however, a re-copy of an earlier one. The original document is alleged to mention that on 5th Mēdam 305 M.E. (1130 A.D.) one Nārāyanan Sunaran of Paḍiññārē Idam, belonging to Vaikom, was installed as Vaṭṭappaḷḷi since the earlier holder of that office had died without heirs. If the re-copy is a genuine document, as it seems to be, the advent of Vaṭṭappalli may be dated to 1130 A.D.

A perusal of the later records indicates that since the reign of Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma (1729 — 58 A.D.) the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi has played an increasingly dominant role. His right of preserving the keys of the shrines, as well as his control over the jewels and vessels of the temple are dated back to the same reign. His position and responsibilities have steadily risen. By the revision of the emoluments effected in 1935 A.D.,

4 e.g. *'Sadya Vattam'*, *'Vattam Kūttuka'* are usages in this sense. The expression *'Vattam Iruttuka'* is employed in the Kaimukku records to denote the summoning of and arranging a meeting of the Sabhai.

5 T.A.S., IV, p. 96.

he is paid monthly a sum of Rs. 250, which, it may be observed, amounts to nearly one-half of the remuneration given to the Nambūdiripād. Besides, the Vattappaḷḷi is entitled to receive a share of the cooked rice and delicacies offered as oblations in the temple. It is remarkable that the members of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi family at Śucīndram have been invariably well versed in the sacred literature found in Samskrit, and Malayālam. Some of them attained proficiency in the branches of astrology and medicine as well. Little wonder, the social status of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar has become high.

(5) *Turakkār*: A class of temple servants, nominated by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, and belonging to the same sub-caste of Malayāḷi Brahmins as the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi himself, is known by the name, Turakkār. They are described as Mūsads. The duties of the Turakkār Mūsads comprise the taking of the articles required for the pūjā from the Temple Store to the Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiris, cleaning the doorsteps of the garbhagrhas and generally assisting the Mēl-Śāntikkār in their work. Besides, as observed earlier, the Turakkār perform the pūjā in certain shrines like those of Śucīndaperumāl, Sabhāpati, Kaṅkāḷanāthar and Cēravātal Śāsta. The carrying of the Śrībali images during every Śrībali procession is also done by the Turakkār. In fact, the daily routine duties which fall to the share of the Sthānikar are all performed by them. It is significant that, the Turakkār, like the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, are entitled to have access up to the final entrance of the Garbhagṛha of Vaḍakkēḍam, a privilege, not enjoyed even by the Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis. None but the Tantri Nambūdiripāḍ and the Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiris can go inside farther than the place approachable by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi and his assistants.

It would be interesting to know how the Turakkār acquired their present designation. Local enquiry offers little help in the matter. The suggestion that Tuṟai was used to denote a temple, as in the case of Āḍutuṟai or of Tiruvālavāyāntuṟai, and that therefore, 'Turakkār' might be a general designation of temple servants seems far-fetched. On the other hand, 'Turam' denotes revenues collected from temple property.[6] It is significant that the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' of Aḷakiyapāṇḍipuram, noticed earlier, use the word 'Turakkār' in the sense of collectors of revenue. Is it likely that, to start with, the Turakkār had been entrusted with the collection of dues from the tenants of the temple? If that

6. See Tamil Lexicon, Vol. IV, p. 1979. See also S.I.I., Vol. V, Nos. 762 and 766.

were so, perhaps, they were the successors of the Vāriyais in office.[7] Later, when the State assumed the control over the temple and its property, these officers were probably diverted to assist the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi in his service inside the temple. The fact that the name 'Turakkār' appears for the first time only in the 'pativukkanakku' or the Accounts of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.), soon after the assumption of the temple by the Government, lends support to this suggestion. In passing, it may be mentioned that the Turakkār are not hereditary employees. They are appointed by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar from time to time as vacancies arise Each member is now paid Rs. 12/- per mensem ; before 1935 A.D., each received only Rs. 3/4/-.

(6) *Tirunāṟṟuppaḍikāval* : Two brahmins, invariably natives of Śucīndram, are nominated by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, as assistants to the Turakkār. They are known by the rather cumbrous name of 'Tirunīṟṟuppadikāval'. Though the designation may suggest that they function as sentries of the inner shrines, in fact, their duty is merely to supply the materials required for the inner service. The oil, wick, coconuts, flowers, garlands, sandal paste, camphor and other requirements are received by them from the Sub-Store and taken to the outer entrance of the main shrines, whence the Turakkār pass them on to the Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiris. Thus, their function is ultimately to assist the arcakas. The fact that they have to place the various articles at the doorway, where the sacred ashes (*Tirunīru*) are given to the visitors was apparently responsible for the designation. Popularly, they are known as 'Tirunaḍakāval'.

This group of assistants appears to have been an old unit of the temple staff. From 994 M.E. (1819 A.D) to 1935 A.D., their monthly pay was Re. 1-8-0 per head and one kaṭṭi of cooked rice daily; since 1935, it has been raised to a monthly pay of Rs. 7 and two kaṭṭis of cooked rice daily.

(7) *Nambiyār Arcakas* : It is certain that from the rise of the temple, there existed at least one arcaka, perhaps more, performing the daily pūjā.[8] The arcaka of the earliest epoch seems to have belonged to the class now described as Nambiyār. The Nambiyārs, otherwise known as Gurukkaḷs or Bhaṭṭars, continue to officiate as arcakas in many of the ancient Śaivite temples of Tamiḻakam. That they were entrusted with this sacred duty even in the 9th and 10th cen-

7. See Infra No. 3 of Section 2, p. 188.

8 The Śiva temple at Kūram in the time of Paramēśvaravarman I (7th century A.D.) had two arcakas, while the Muktēśvara shrine at Kāñci (8th century A.D.) had three brahmins, as well as their sons and grandsons, to perform the pūjā

turies A.D. is proved by the inscriptions of the period. Pallava epigraphs speak of the Guṟukkaḷs, Śaivācāryas or Śivabrāhmaṇas, as they were variously called, performing pūjā in shrines of the still earlier period.[9] Nambiyārs of Śucīndram are Śivabrāhmins, and are not to be confused with the Nambiyārs of Malabār, who are Nāirs.[10]

There is adequate evidence to show that the earliest arcakas in the Śucīndram temple were Śivabrāhmins, now known as Nambiyārs. In the first place, they have been all along performing the śānti in the Konṟayaḍināthar shrine, which is the earliest nucleus of the Śucīndram pagoda. Secondly, the Nambiyārs, and in particular, the same members performing pūjā at Śucīndram, have been the officiating priests in the Aññanameḻutiyakandan Śāsta temple at Āśrāmam.[11] It must be remembered that legendary lore associates this Śāsta temple with the Konṟayaḍināthar shrine.

At present, the Nambiyārs perform pūjā in the Konṟayaḍināthar, Dakṣiṇāmūrti and the Gōpuravātal shrines and the Citra Sabha as well as in the Pērambalam Naṭarāja shrine, located in the South Street. While the service in the Konṟayaḍināthar and perhaps in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti shrines dates back to a very early period, their śānti in the Gōpurāvātal shrines appears to have commenced about 1545 A.D., in Pērambalam sometime before 1597 A.D. and in the Citṟa Sabha ever since its inception. Very likely, before the advent of the Nambūdiri Śāntikkāṟ to the place, the service in the principal shrines of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam, too, was in their hands

In respect of those shrines with which the Nambiyārs are now associated, they enjoy not only the right of perfoming the Śānti but also the tantram, or the supreme spiritual authority concerning the rites and ceremonies. Neither the Nambūdiri Tantri nor the Vāṭṭappaḷḷi has any tantric right over them. For example, the aṣṭabandham, kalaśam and other purificatory ceremonies in these particular shrines are conducted entirely by the Nambiyārs. The Nambiyārs perform the above mentioned duties of arcana and tantram by virtue of a hereditary right. Two Nambiyārs who perform the śānti by turns, get a monthly pay of

9 For examples see S.I.I., Vol. I, p. 154, S.I.I, Vol. III, Part I, p. 91; and A.R.E. 84 of 1892.

10. In Tamiḻ 'Nambu' means 'pūjā'. From 'Nambu' is derived Nambiyār, viz, one who offers pūjā in temples.

11. According to the legend, Atri's Āśram and the Hōmakunda where he performed sacrifice, were located just in front of this Śāsta temple.

Rs. 13/- each. The arcaka of the Pērambalam shrine does not receive a monetary remuneration; he gets nothing more than a share of the cooked rice offered as neivēdya. Prior to 1935 A.D., the Nambūdiri arcakas at the main temple and at Pērambalam were each paid only the paltry sum of Re. 1 — 1 ch. — 12 cash (i.e. Re. 1/1/-) each! Now the former are each given 9 kaṭṭis (4½ iḍangaḻis of cooked rice) and the latter 7 kaṭṭis (3½ iḍangaḻis of cooked rice).

(8) *Brahmins for Śiva Pūjā:* Twenty-four brahmins, invariably natives of Śucīndram, are employed for offering prayers to Śiva, the principal deity of the temple At about 7 a.m., prior to the abhiṣēkha or the anointing of the image, these twenty-four brahmins assemble in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, and, shaping small Śiva lingas out of clay, recite prayers and offer incantations to them. These members are not paid any monetary remuneration, but each one of them is allotted two kaṭṭis or blocks of cooked rice. True, no record earlier than that of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) mentions this group. But local tradition avers that the practice was established by Kārtikai Tirunāḷ, the Dharma Rāja (1758-98 A.D.). It may be mentioned that, on the night of Śivarātri, in the month of Māśi (February-March), well over a hundred brahmins are engaged in making Śiva-lingas of clay and in offering prayers. No remuneration is paid to them.

(9) *Namaskāram*: Sixteen brahmins of Śucīndram are appointed to offer prayers and chant mantras such as the Pañcākṣara and Aṣṭākṣara. The recital of the mantras is followed by prostration before the deity, hence the name Namaskāram. These 16 brahmins are not paid monetary remuneration, but are fed in the temple at about 11-30 a.m. after the morning pūjā. It is interesting to learn that the 40 brahmins, who are engaged in connection with the above-mentioned Śivapūjā and Namaskāram, are not regular employees of the temple. The charge of feeding them has been met from the privy purse of the ruler. There is a great probability that both of these items were started by Kārtikai Tirunāḷ. Popular tradition supports this view.

(10) *Maṇḍapa Japakkār*: Twenty-four Malayāḷi brahmins of the Tiruvalla Dēśi Pōṟṟi group are employed for offering prayers and chanting mantras during the time of the evening dīpārādhana. Their appointment, made by the Government, is on a hereditary basis. It may be mentioned that, during the major part of the year, only about 18 members of the group are found in Śucīndram, the others going to their native villages, by turns.

No reference to the Mandapajapakkār is found in the records of the temple before 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.). It seems probable that this group was originally introduced into Śucīndram either by Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma or Rāma Varma Dharma Rāja. The popular tradition is that twenty four brahmins fled for their lives from North Malabār to Tiruvalla, their present native place, and thence took refuge in Śucīndram. It is not unlikely that the insecurity caused by Tipu's threat of invasion in 1790 A.D. was responsible for this incident. However, the belief is that they were persuaded by the then ruling sovereign of Travancore to reside permanently in Śucīndram, working as hereditary japakkār.

The Maṇḍapajapakkār, besides attending to their daily duty, participate in all the festivals of the temple. In connection with the celebration of the 'Kalabham', otherwise called 'Gaṇapati Hōmam', they offer prayers conjointly, after the Tantri has performed the Abhiṣēkha and applied the kaḷabham or sandal paste to the image. Each of the 24 brahmins has been paid, both before and after 1935 A.D., Rs. 14/- per mensem (Rs. 10/- towards their meals and Rs. 4/- as dakṣiṇa or present of money).

(11) *Vēda Adhyayanam*: The reference to the employment of two teachers of the Vēda is found in the Ācārakkaṇakku of 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.); none of the earlier records adverts to it. However, this negative evidence does not prove that the practice of teaching the Vēda was not in existence earlier than that date. In numberless ancient temples, the free imparting of Vēdic lore was undertaken from early times. Contemporary inscriptions bear eloquent testimony to the great service rendered by the early Hindu temples in their capacity as centres of higher learning. The inscriptions at Kāñci, Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, Eṇṇāyiram, Tirumukkūḍal and Tṛibhuvani, to mention but a few examples, furnish excellent proof of the educational activity of the early Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Cōla temples. The known details about the patronage of the temples and the practices common to the Agrahāras show that we may not be far wrong if we hold that the establishment of a Vēda Adhyayanan in Śucīndram might have arisen before the 11th century A.D. Down to 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.), the Adhyayanan, too, appears to have been paid remuneration in paddy. From 1811 to 1929 A.D., each was paid but a nominal sum of Rs. 1/4/-. By the revision effected in 1935 A.D., they are given Rs. 10/- each per mensem.

(12) *Āryampāḍi:* The Accounts of the temple from 916 to 994 M.E. (1741 to 1819 A.D.) speak of one Āryampāḍi as one of the

employees. Apparently, his duty was to chant the Vēda during the pūjā. We find a corresponding employee in the famous Bṛhadīśvara temple of Rāja Rāja.[12] That the Vēdas were recited every day at the time of worship by brahmins appointed for the purpose is amply borne out by numerous early inscriptions in South Indian temples.[13] Interesting is the Cōḷa inscription which records an endowment in the temple at Paṇḍāravāḍai for holding a contest in the recitation of a prescribed portion in the Śāma Vēda.[14] It seems probable that, in Śucīndram, the post of the Āryampādi was created some time during the period of Cōḷa contact, viz., in the 11th or 12th century A.D. However, a remarkable feature is that the Accounts of the temple subsequent to 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) do not speak of the same functionary. Apparently, the office of the Āryampāḍi was amalgamated with that of the Adhyayanan.

(13) *Bhārata Pārāyaṇam*: The practice of expounding the Mahābhāratam has been in vogue in the Śucīndram temple for quite a long time. Reference to it in the records of the temple, however, appears only in the 18th century A.D. It is well known that, before the 11th century A.D. the practice was common in several temples. That it was adopted even in the early Pallava shrines is learnt from the Taṇḍantōṭṭam plates.[15] Moreover, the Kūram grant mentions that a brahmin scholar was appointed to recite the Mahābhārata inside the Maṇḍapa of Vidyāvinita Pallavēśvara temple at the village of Paramēśvaramaṅgalam.[16] Not only in the temples of Tamiḻakam proper, but also in those of Malai Nāḍ, the practice had come into vogue. Tirukkaḍittānam, not far away from Śucīndram, had adopted it as early as the 10th century A.D. On the whole, it seems likely that the Bhārata Pārāyaṇam had appeared in Śucīndram far earlier than the 18th century A.D. The Accounts show that the brahmin appointed to expound the Mahābhārata was paid Rs. 2-12-0 till 1935 A.D. By the revision effected in 1935 A.D., his remuneration has been raised to Rs. 10/-. It appears that, on sacred days, a leading member of the place performed this duty. The records of 1819 A.D. indicate that on Tai Pūśa day the Sōmāśimaṅgalam Pōṟṟi, one of the Yōgakkār, expounded the Mahābhārata.

12. S I. I., Vol. II, 65.
13. e.g. A.R.E., 103 of 1926 and 52 of 1928.
14. A. R. E, 266 of 1923.
15. S. I. I., Vol. II, Part V, p. 534.
16 S. I. I, Vol. I, p. 151, line 75

(14) *Ōtuvār:* One of the early members of the retinue in the temple was the chorist, the singer of the Tiruppadigam. It is not possible to determine the time when this custom arose in Śucīndram. That the practice was not uncommon in South Indian temples as early as the 9th century A.D. is evident from the Tiruvallam inscription.[17] Though reference to this institution in the Śucīndram temple records is not found earlier than 915 M.E. (1740 A.D.), this negative evidence does not prove that it was not in vogue earlier. In fact, the probability is that it was introduced during or before the time of Rāja Rāja I. There is little doubt that it was established before the advent of the Malayāḻi authorities.

A palm-leaf record of the temple reveals that, long before 1740 A.D., there existed the practice of the Ōtuvār reciting verses from 'Dēvāram', 'Tiruvācagam' and 'Pallāṇḍu' at specified places in the Śrībalipura immediately after the attāḻapūjā. The record states that in the main temple, following the evening Dīpārādhana, the Ōtuvār is to recite a hymn of Dēvāram in the Āditya Maṇḍapa near the Dhvajastambha, a hymn from 'Tiruvācagam' near the southern doorway, one from 'Tiruiśaippā' near the western doorway and another from 'Pallāṇḍu' near the northern doorway The same document adds that another Ōtuvār recites hymns from Dēvāram in Pērambalam soon after the evening Dīpārādhana. The rights and duties of the chorists were regulated by a Kārāṇmai deed, executed in 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.) In 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.), they were each given a mere pittance of 14 annas per mensem. By the revision of 1935 A.D., the remuneration has been raised to Rs. 4/-.

SECTION 2 THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

(1) *Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu:* Long before the 13th century A.D. there were certain officials, who looked after important executive work in managing the affairs of the temple. The Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu, Vāriyar and Karaṇattān were some of those officers. In this connection it is necessary to repeat that, prior to the 11th century A.D., when the differentiation of functions between the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai and the Mahāsabhai was not clear-cut, some of the officers appeared to be as much connected with the management of the temple as with that of the village. This was definitely the case with the officer known as Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu.

17. S. I. I., Vol. III, Part I

One of the earliest officials associated with the temple and the village, the Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu is mentioned in the inscription of the 19th year of Cōḻan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya. Cērāntaka Brahmarāyan, the Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu, preferred a complaint to the Mahāsabhai that one Vanganṟa Dēvan mortgaged and sold Dēvadāna lands. Mēleḻuttu seems to denote that he was the chief accountant.[18] But the qualifying word, 'Adhikāra', may signify either the authority which he wielded by virtue of his office or the unit of which he was the accountant. In later times, the term 'Adhikāram' has been used to connote a revenue division like the *Pakuti,* the subdivision of a Taluk. There is no evidence of the word having denoted such a unit in the 10th century A.D. It is probable that, then, the entire village was considered as an 'Adhikāram'. Doubtless, the maintenance of the Accounts pertaining to the dēvadāna lands fell within the jurisdiction of the Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu. It is not known what his position was in relation to the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai. Since the latter institution was functioning under the sovereign authority of the Mahāsabhai, it seems probable that he was a common official of both the bodies. The description 'Mēleḻuttu' suggests that there were other accountants working under him. How many they were in the early period of the history of Śucīndram there is no means of knowing. It is presumable that, working under the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai, there were a few accountants concerned solely with the temple affairs, and under the Mahāsabhai a few others concerned with the village. This presumption has to be made subject to the proviso, that even the activities of the Mahāsabhai were predominantly concerned with the temple and its property. It is strange that the designation, 'Adhikāra Mēleḻuttu' as such, does not figure in any of the later records. Probably, it became merged in one of the offices like 'Sabhaikkaṇakku', 'Śrībhaṇḍārakkaṇakku' or 'Maṇḍapakkaṇakku', which appear from the 16th century A.D. onwards.

(2) *Dēvakarmi* :—The only other official that we hear of before the dissolution of the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai in 1000 A.D. is the dēvakarmi or dēvakanmi. But this office continued long after the exit of the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai. The earliest mention of the 'dēvakarmi' occurs in Śucīndram in the inscription of the 14th year of Rāja Rāja I i.e., in 999 A.D., just a few months before the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai tendered its resignation. Some of the duties that the dēvakarmis' had to perform

18. Until recently, Mēleḻuttu was the vernacular equivalent of the Accountant-General of the State.

are incidentally mentioned in that epigraph. They were to supervise and secure the proceeds from those dēvadāna lands which were exempted from taxes — "*Kadan parrāda nilattu tēvarkarmikaḷ kaṇkāṇittu varuvārkaḷāvar*".[19] The responsibility, specified in the inscription, has been translated by the epigraphist merely as 'supervision of the lands'. This is too vague; it does not denote the entire responsibility connoted by the term 'Kaṇkāṇittu'. The latter expression is commonly used to represent that method of realizing the yield from the land let on lease by the owner supervising the harvest and allocating a fixed portion of the yield to the tenant.[20] Obviously, in the context in which the word appears in the Śucīndram inscription, it is used in this sense. Thus, the duty of supervising the lands when they were being cultivated, and the more responsible work of collecting the proceeds from the lands at the time of the harvest, fell to the lot of the Dēvakarmis.

It is certain that this class of officials continued to function even after the Malayāḷi Yōgakkār secured control over the management of the temple. An inscription of 421 M.E. (1246 A.D.) states that, in the event of lapses in the maintenance of the lamp, the donation for which is registered in the record, the money would have to be paid to that person directed by the Dēvakarmis for the prompt discharge of the service. The inscription runs thus: "*Tirunandā viḷakku muṭṭāmal celvatākavum ippaḍic ceyyumiḍattil. . . .mūnṟu māsam muṭṭukil ivvaccupattum dēvarkanmikaḷ conna iḍattil celutti tirunandā viḷakku muṭṭāmal. . . .celuttumāṟu karpitta*". This makes it clear that the supervision of the charities to the temple and the entrusting of specified service to proper agents or servants also fell within the purview of the duties of the Dēvakarmis.[21]

19. T. A. S, IV, p. 129.

20. The usage 'Kankāṇıttu' occurs in numerous palm-leaf records of the temple, and continues to be employed by rural folk even today. In an inscription of Bhāskararavivarman, belonging to 1036 A.D., it figures in the same sense. See T. A. S., II, p. 49

21. The Dēvakarmis, as officers of the temple, were not peculiar to Śucīndram or South Travancore. They are mentioned in several early South Indian inscriptions That in Cōḷapuram, Dēvakarmis were functioning in the time of Jātāvarman Sundara Cōla Pāndya, is learnt from an epigraph of his period. (See T. A. S., VI, pp. 11-12). Outside Travancore, we find a record of Tirumalvādi mentioning Dēvakarmis as having been entrusted with some land for offerings to an image. (See S. I. I., Vol. V, p. 644). Besides, an inscription of Tiruvidaimarudūr states that the dēvakarmis of the temple, along with the Sabhai of Tiramūr and the Nagaram, were to be together responsible for the proper management of the temple. See A. R E., 199 of 1907.

However, barely a general idea of the duties entrusted to the Śucīndram Dēvakarmis can be gathered. In temples of other parts of South India, they appear to have been charged with very responsible and dignified duties. So far as the information from Śucīndram warrants us, we may conclude that the dēvakarmis were little more than collectors and supervisors of revenue, functioning under the immediate control of the Mūla Paruda Sabhai in the first instance, and under the Yōgakkār later.

There is no means of ascertaining the history of the office after the 14th century A.D. No inscription of a later period refers to the Dēvakarmi But, when the responsibilities of the temple were steadily increasing, this office would by no means have been abolished. What seems probable is, that after a time, the post of the 'dēvakarmi' underwent a change of name. Perhaps, with the increase in the number of officials, more of differentiation in the functions of the various groups of assistants resulted. What the later designation of the post held by the successor of the Dēvakarmi was, it is not possible to determine. Probably, one of the several accountants of the later period assumed the duties of the former Dēvakarmi.

(3) *Vāriyar*: The fall of the Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai witnessed the rise of the two classes of officers, the 'Vāriyar' and 'Karaṇattān'. The very inscription which records the resignation of the Mūla Paruda Sabhai states that the Mahāsabhai at once appointed two Vāriyars and a Karaṇattān to manage the business of the temple.

As in the case of several early institutions, attempts at understanding their origin through the etymology of their names have been made. A derivation from the Tamil word 'Vari' meaning income has been suggested, and the Kannaḍa connotation of 'Vari' as a 'rigorous demand' has been urged. That 'Vāriyar' is connected with the term 'Vāriyam' which might be a Tamilized form of the Samskrit word 'Vārya' meaning 'selected' or 'chosen' has been yet another, and perhaps a more acceptable, line of approach.[22]

One preliminary question to be settled is whether or not *vāriyar* and 'vāriyam' were connected with each other. A mere verbal similarity need not necessarily mean a close association. The few references that we have of the 'vāriyar' in Śucīndram and elsewhere, do not suggest their relationship with the 'vāriyam', which really denotes

22. See K. A. N. Sastri's "The Cōlas", Vol II, pp. 281 ff.

a committee. In the inscription of 1000 A.D., the two vāriyars, along with the Karaṇattān, are said to have assumed the responsibilities of collecting the dues from the tenants and of managing the affairs of the temple, which duties were till then undertaken by the Paruda Sabhai. There is nothing here which suggests any connection with a committee. Nor does the wording of the inscription, under consideration, indicate any kind of election for the formation of the 'vāriyam'. It runs thus: "*Sabhaiyōr vaicca vāriyar iruvarum karaṇattānum kūḍi*". It states clearly that the Sabhai appointed the vāriyar and karanattān. Obviously, it seems to have been a case of appointment of executive officials by the Mahāsabhai. Again, an inscription of Uttaramērūr of vāriyam fame, speaks of the vāriyar as if they were subordinate officers of the Sabhai.[23] The expression 'Vāriyapperumakkaḷ' occurring in another record of the same place, does not seem to have any reference to a committee or to the employment of election.[24] Nor is Mr. Venkayya's translation of '*dharmakṛtyan-gaḍai-kkāṇum-vāriyarē*' in line 13 of the inscription of the 14th year of Parāntaka as a 'committee for supervision of justice', found to be correct.[25]

Thus, while it is not clear that the Vāriyar was a member of a committee, it is certain that he was one of the officials entrusted with some executive functions. It is perfectly obvious from the Śucīndram inscription of 1000 A.D. that the duties of the Paruḍa Sabhai it was, which were shared by the Vāriyars and the Karaṇattān. Another inscription of the 4th century M.E. or the 12th century A.D. refers to a single Vāriyan, Śaṅkaranārāyanan of Ranasinganallūr, whose duty was to supply a stipulated quantity of paddy for the maintenance of a lamp and to keep clean the premises of the Śrīmad Dvārakai temple by employing a sweeper. This inscription, too, confirms our view that the Vāriyan or Vāriyar had nothing to do with a committee.

The duties of the Vāriyar might not have continued the same all through the ages. Employed originally as an executive official, the Vāriyar of the earlier period was, in the main, entrusted with the collection of the incomes due to the temple. The name was, in all probability, derived from 'vari' denoting tax or 'vāru' meaning 'to collect'. Later, some other services connected with the temple seem to have been assigned to the Vāriyar.

23. A R. E. 74 of 1898.
24. A. R. E. 63 of 1898.
25. See the different translation given by Prof. K. A. N. Sastri in his "Studies in Cōla History and Administration"., p. 157.

The interesting feature about the 'vāriyar' is that in the Malayāḷi land of North Travancore and Cochin, the name became the basis of a sub-caste among Ambalavāsis. Most fantastic are the views advanced by writers regarding the origin of the caste. Known facts about the present avocations and customs of the Vāriyars have been ingeniously combined with legendary lore, in order to formulate certain theories.[26]

A perusal of these theories reveals that they are far-fetched and that the existing customs among the Vāriyars have been attempted to be read into the past. In all likelihood, Vāriyars were, to start with, none but executive officials of the temple. Later, as is seen from the inscription of the 13th century A.D., noticed above, the duty of supervising the cleanliness of the temple premises and other odd jobs were entrusted to them. When they were associated with services within the precincts of the temple, they adopted scrupulous habits of personal cleanliness. Perhaps, even the cleaning of pūjā vessels and the door-steps was entrusted to them. After they became intimately connected with the daily routine of the temple, they were, in due course, classed as 'Ambalavāsis'. Following their close association with the shrines, perhaps, there arose the practice of junior members of the Nambūdiri families consorting with Vāriyar girls. This usage would have fixed the social rank of the caste still more definitely as Ambalavāsis.

So far as Śucīndram is concerned, the Vāriyar as such, does not figure in any of the records after the 13th century A.D. Evidently, the officers who assumed their functions in later periods, were called by other names. Though it may seem at first fantastic, one is tempted to think that the name 'Vāriyar' must have originally travelled from Tamiḻakam to the Malayāḷa Dēśa. It would appear that Śucīndram served as the transmitting centre. Long before the Nambūdiris and Pōṟṟis came into contact with Śucīndram, Vāriyar as an executive official of the temple had appeared, and, after the Malayāḷi authorities were established in Śucīndram, probably they set up this office, or at any rate, endowed that designation to those undertaking similar functions in Malayāḷi temples. It should be remembered that the Nambūdiris and Pōṟṟis in Śucīndram not only kept up an active connection

26. See the description of five theories of origin explained by Nagamiah in his State Manual, Vol. II, pp. 338-39; also see Anantakrishna Aiyar's "Cochin Castes and Tribes"; Vol. II, pp 137 ff; "Travancore Census Report of 1891, pp. 746 ff; and Sundaram Pillay: "Early Sovereigns of Travancore", pp. 85 ff.

with temples in the north, like those of Trivandrum and Vaikom, but that they were in close contact with their homes, located still farther north. Perhaps, this contact paved the way for the transplantation of the Śucīndram institution of 'Vāriyar' in the temples of the north. The later development of a Vāriyar caste appears to have emerged by reason of the peculiar social customs of the Nambūdiris and their close association with the Vāriyars.

(4) *Karaṇattān* :— In Śucīndram, so far as our present knowledge goes, we hear of the Karaṇattān for the first and last time in 1000 A.D. He was the colleague of the two vāriyars appointed by the Mahāsabhai on the dissolution of the Mūla Paruda Sabhai. In the absence of additional information, we are obliged to look out to other places of South India for having an idea of the position and functions of the Karaṇattān. An inscription in Rājēndra Cōḷa Viṇṇagaram at Mannārkōil[27] states that the Karanattān wrote the sale deed of the Sabhai in favour of the temple. Again, the trial scene depicted by Śēkkiḻār as taking place in the Sabhai of Tiruveṇṇainallūr, where Sundaramūrti is accused of having been a bond-slave of a brahmin, introduces the Karaṇattān as the scribe who reads out to the assembly the document produced by the plaintiff in the case. It indicated that the Karaṇattān played the role of a 'bench clerk', to use a modern designation. Yet another epigraph[28] reveals that the Karaṇattān is the accountant, preserving the records and supervising the observance of the boundaries of land.

If the above-mentioned instances provide us with any help in understanding the duties of the Karaṇattān in Śucīndram, we may conclude that he was essentially a clerk or record-keeper. In fact, the word 'Karaṇam' means document; obviously therefore, the Karaṇattān was in charge of the documents of the temple. The Vāriyars were the executive officials and the Karaṇattān was their colleague in the maintenance of the accounts of all transactions. Later, the designation of the post might have undergone a change; perhaps, this accounts for the absence of later reference to Karaṇattān as such.

(5) *Poduvāḷ* :— One group of early temple officials, who continued to render service even much later than the 15th century A.D., was known as 'Poduvāḷ'. As in the case of the Vāriyar, the Poduvāḷ became the designation of a sub-caste of Ambalavāsis in the Malayāḷi

27 E. I, Vol. XI, pp 292 ff.
28. A. R. E 30 of 1919.

land and, therefore, a consideration of their history in Śucīndram is particularly interesting.

So far as inscriptions go, we hear of this designation applied to a class of temple servants only as late as 421 M.E. (1246 A.D.).[29] That they enjoyed a fairly high status among the hierarchy of officials is learnt from this inscription itself, which shows that a donation of money for burning a lamp was passed on to the hands of the Poduvāḷs —'*Ikkōyilil atikāramudaiya poduvāṉmār eppērpaṭṭārum kaikkoṇḍa puduppoṉ accu pattum*'. This indicates, beyond doubt, the authority they enjoyed. Indeed, the inscription under consideration, may suggest that the Poduvāls were not different from, nor lower in status than, the Śrī Kāryamceyvār or the Ūrāṇmaikkār. But, unlike the latter, the Poduvāḷs are not known to have exercised control over the landed property of the temple. It is, therefore, likely that the Poduvāḷs were just lower in rank than and were working under the direction of the Ūrāṇmaikkār. That the Poduvāḷ was held in high esteem is further inferred from the inscription of 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.)[30] The large endowments of land and money bestowed by the Travancore ruler Śrī Vīra Rāma Śrī Rāma Varma for the conduct of special pūjās and ceremonies were entrusted to the 'Poduvāl Tenkōttu Śivīndravādi Kēśvan'. It is also recorded that the ruler resided with him while he was at Śucīndram.

It is interesting to observe that the designation of this office as Poduvāḷ has now become a distinctively Malayāḷi one. We do not hear of the same name in the records of the Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa or Vijayanagar kings. On the other hand, outside Śucīndram, the designation of this class of temple staff occurs in several inscriptions of the Vēṇāḍ rulers.[31] Evidently, the name came to be applied to a group of managers of the temple's business. That they were different from the members of the old Mūla Paruḍa Sabhai or their successors, the Ūrāṇmaikkār, is seen from the interesting inscription of Bhāskara Ravivarman at Tirukkadittānam, which runs thus: "*Mukkāl vaṭṭattavirōtattāl ūrum paruḍaiyārum poduvāḷum kūḍi ceida karumamāvidu.*"[32]

The Poduvāḷs, like the Vāriyars, in course of time, developed into a sub-caste of Ambalavāsis. At present, they are said to occupy a

29. See Appendix—Inscription No. 52
30. See T A. S., IV, pp. 92 ff.
31. See, for example, T. A. S., II, p. 23; and Ibid p. 34.
32. *Ibid* p. 36.

position mid-way between the brahmins and the nāirs in respect of social gradation. Gopinatha Rao is inclined to think that the name, Poduvāḷ, was applied to the Mūttadu, attached to temples.[33] But, it is a pity that he does not indicate the basis for his suggestion.

In the Śucīndram records, a name, 'Śivīndravādi Kēśavan', figures prominently. The Accounts of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) give an important place to an official bearing that name. It is clear from the records of that year that he plays the role of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar.[34] Obviously, 'Śivīndravādi Kēśavan' was a surname of Vaṭṭappaḷḷi as Śēndan Śivīndravādi' appears to have been of Puttillam Pōṟṟi.[35] If that were so, Śivīndravādi Kēśavan, figuring as Poduvāḷ in the inscription of 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.), was an ancestor of Vaṭṭappaḷḷi.

Nagamiah states that "the caste of Poduvāḷ is believed to have sprung from a brahmin's connection with a nāir woman."[36] But this, too, as in the case of the Vāriyar caste, appears to be an attempt to read known features of a later age into the past. Like the Vāriyar, the Poduvāḷ was an official of the temple; perhaps, in the early days 'Poduvāḷ' signified but a common person, a public servant or official. The Poduvāḷ, as a caste of Ambalavāsi, did not arise or flourish in Śucīndram. We do not hear of the officials bearing this name after the 15th century A.D. Probably, the designation 'Vaṭṭappaḷḷi' was applied to the Poduvāḷ of older days. Members of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi section belong to the Mūttadu caste.[37] In manners and customs they are not at all distinguishable from the Malayāḷi Brahmins. In fact, Dr. Kunjan Pillai[38] describes them as a class of Śaiva Brahmins.

33. Ibid, p. 147, Note.

34. See the following piece of instruction found in the Accounts of 994, M.E.

"അതിനു മുമ്പ് കൊടിമരത്തിൽ തിരുവിളക്ക വച്ചു് ബലിക്കല്ലിൻ മേൽ കൊടിപ്പട്ടത്തെ വിരിച്ചു് കയറു കൊണ്ടു കെട്ടി ശുചീന്ദ്രവാദി കേശവൻ പുത്തില്ലത്തു പോററിക്ക കൊടുക്കണം."

"Śucīndravādi" appears to have been the title or surname of the "Sthānakkār" of the Śucīndram temple, given to the nine Yōgakkār, as well as to the Vattappaḷḷi Paṭṭar.

35. e.g. The inscriptions of 772 M.E., 781 M.E., and the Accounts of 994 M.E., speak of Puttillam Pōṟṟi as 'Śēndan Śivīndravādi'.

36. State Manual., Vol. II, p. 344.

37. See Nagamiah · State Manual, Vol. II, pp. 326-27 for an account of the Mūttadu.

38. See Travancore Census Report (1931) p. 375.

(6) *Śrīkāryam* :—A high official, managing the day-to-day affairs of the temple during the palmy days of the Yōgakkār, was Śrīkāryam. He continues to exercise immediate control over the routine administration even today, under the anglicised designation of Manager.

When exactly the office of Śrīkāryam was created, there is no means of determining. The earliest inscription referring to the Śrīkāryam is that dated 14th Mārkaḻi 720 M.E. in which Vāṭpālai Dēvan Kēśavan, the Śrīkārym, is shown as a signatory to the document.[39] Whether he was only one of the Śrīkāryamceyvār (or the Ūrāṇmaikkār) or, on the other hand, the incumbent of a separate office, is a doubt that might arise at first. But, it seems clear that Vāṭpālai Dēvan Kēśavan was the Śrīkāryam and not one of the Śrīkāryamceyvār or Ūrāṇmaikkār. This is evident from the fact that, while the number of Ūrāṇmaikkār in Śucīndram was but nine, the record under consideration, specifies ten names. Further, while the family names of all the nine Śrīkāryamceyvār are those of the Yōgakkār of the later period, the Śrīkāryam's family name is different and it appears for the first time among the records of the temple. Besides, an inscription of the 14th Māśi 724 M.E. (1549 A.D.)[40] furnishes the name of a Śrīkāryam as Nārāyaṇan Śaṅkaran of Veḷḷikkāḍu, in addition to the names of the nine Śrīkāryamceyvār. Thus it is obvious that there worked an officer called Śrīkāryam and that this office must have arisen some time before 720 M.E. (1544 A.D.).

The fact that, in the inscriptions of 722 M.E. and of 724 M.E., his name appears first among the signatories, even prior to those of the great Śrīkāryamceyvār, suggests that the Śrīkāryam of those days was an officer of no small status. He was, in all probability, the highest among the official staff of the temple, occupying an administrative position next in rank only to that of the owner-managers, the Śrīkāryamceyvār.

The office of Śrīkāryam has had a chequered history. He appears to have been the chief official till 906 M.E. (1731 A.D.), when, the astute ruler, Bālamārtaṇḍa Varma, appointed a Valiya Śrīkāryakkār to work in collaboration with the Śrīkāryam of old. Naturally, this step resulted in a set-back in the position and authority of the Śrīkāryam. When, later in 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.), the entire management of the temple passed into the hands of the Government, the office of Śrīkāryam,

39 T. A S, VIII, pp 1-2.
40. See Appendix—Inscription No. 70.

though retained, suffered a further decline in status. No doubt, he continued to be in charge of the management of the daily routine of the temple, but, he was to work under the authoritative supervision of the Revenue officials like the Peishkar and Tahsildar. Finally, when the Dēvasvam Department was created in 1097 M.E. (1922 A.D.) the authority of Śrīkāryam became reduced still further. With the Group Superintendent, having his headquarters in Śucīndram itself, and the Assistant Commissioner conducting frequent inspections, the successor of the Śrīkāryam of old, has but the shadow of the vast powers associated with the office. He is officially designated as the Manager, though the people of the locality continue to call him by the older designation. He is now paid a monthly salary of Rs. 50/-. But his pay is nothing when compared with the perquisites that the Śrīkāryam used to receive in the past.

(7) *Accountants* :— Several accountants, with definitely allocated duties, appear to have been employed during the period of the administration of the Ūrāṇmaikkār. There was a Śrīkāryakkaṇakku, Śrībhaṇḍārakkaṇakku, Maṇḍapakkaṇakku, Tavaikkanakku and Ūrkkaṇakku. Most of the accountants who functioned under the authorities of the temple are mentioned in an inscription, dated 14th Māśi 724 M.E. (1549 A.D.). The closing lines registering the witnesses to the deed of appointment of a village official record the names and designations of the various accountants. They are as follows: *Srīkāryakkaṇakku Aiyappan Mārtaṇḍan eḻuttu ; Maṇḍapakkaṇakku Dikkellāmpukaḻum Perumāḷ eḻuttu ; Tavakkaṇakku Īccuran Kālakkuṭṭy eḻuttu.* The accountant, 'Śrī Bhaṇḍārakkaṇakku', is mentioned in the two inscriptions of 720 M.E. and in that of 745 M.E.,[41] as well as in numerous palm-leaf records of the pagoda.

The specific duties assigned to the various classes of accountants may be gathered from the records. The 'Śrībhaṇḍārakkaṇakku' was the accountant in charge of the temple treasury. Naturally, he was the most important officer. The total income and expenditure, both in kind and in coin, were recorded by him. The 'Śrīkāryakkaṇakku' on the other hand, maintained the Accounts of only the expenses connected with the daily services and ceremonies. The 'Maṇḍapakkaṇakku was unquestionably a subordinate clerk who preserved the Accounts of only the special ceremonies and of the annual Utsavas. It is not known why

41 See Appendix. Inscriptions Nos. 66-71

he was designated 'Maṇḍapakkaṇakku'. But, just as Maṇḍapappaḍi pertains to a particular procession in connection with Utsavas, so also the Maṇḍapakkaṇakku had to concern himself with Utsavas. Perhaps, since the Vāhanas or vehicles taken out in procession had to pass through the Maṇḍapas of the temple, this strange name came to be adopted.

Tavaikkanakku or Sabhaikkaṇakku, as the name indicates, was the accountant of the Sabhai. But, it is important to observe that Sabhai in this context, denoted only the corporation of the Yōgakkār. Surprisingly enough, the designation, tavaikkaṇakku, still survives, though it now denotes an accountant of the temple. He functions under the Dēvasvam Department and receives a pay of Rs. 17/- per mensem. The 'tavaikkaṇakku' kept the Accounts of the dues to and from each one of the Yōgakkār. The various 'pativus' due to them from the temple on the one hand, and the paddy that was to be passed to the temple treasury on the other, had all to be recorded. At present, the 'tavaikkaṇakku' or, 'tavappiḷḷay' as he is popularly called, is one of the clerks attached to the temple.

A village accountant is referred to in the inscription of Māśi 14th 724 M.E. But, obviously, he was not in charge of the Accounts of the entire village of Śucīndram. The inscription, mentioned above, speaks of him as the accountant for the lands owned by the Śucīndram temple in a particular village, Anumakētana Nallūr, apparently, the present Arumainallūr on the northern fringe of Nāñcināḍ. The inscription runs thus: *"Nāinār deśam anumakētananallūr uḷḷiṭṭapparṟukku ūrkaṇakku eḻutikkoṇḍu."* It shows that this clerk had only to maintain the Accounts of the paddy lands belonging to the Śucīndram temple, located in the village of Anumakētana Nallūr.

It is interesting to find that the various accountants were, during the palmy days of the Yōgakkār, granted plots of paddy lands, the produce of which formed their main remuneration. In addition, they were given a portion of the cooked rice in the temple as well as a share in all the delicacies offered to the deities. Perhaps, special privileges were granted to them during the celebration of particular ceremonies and the Utsavas. Various inscriptions speak of the rights enjoyed by the accountants.[42] Later, when the Government assumed control over the temple, and still

42 For example, see the inscription of 14th Mārkaḻi 720 M.E., T.A.S., VIII, pp 1-2.

later, when the Dēvasvam Department was created, the former accountants were all merged in the clerical staff of the temple working under the Department.

SECTION 3. SERVANTS OF THE LOWER ORDER

There existed always a body of servants rendering various kinds of physical service for the temple. Even from the early days of the temple's history, a considerable number of individuals must have been employed for such work. But we have little knowledge regarding their exact number, the nature of their service, or their remuneration. It is only for the period commencing with the 18th century A.D., that we obtain some data about them from the Accounts of the temple.

1. *Brāhmanasēvakam :* One of these groups is the body of seven servants, recorded in the Accounts as 'Brāhmaṇasēvakam'. Their work partakes of the character of menial service. Cleaning the Maḍappaḷḷi, the temple kitchen, carrying the cooked rice from the Madappaḻḻi to the shrines and back, making the cooked rice into blocks (kaṭṭis) for distribution among the customary claimants, and serving food for brahmins at the time of the Namaskāram and Mṛsṭānnam feeding, are the chief duties allotted to them. They are not hereditary servants, but are appointed from time to time, as vacancies arise. The earliest mention about them as a class, occurs only in the Accounts of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.). Perhaps, prior to that date, they were not known by the present designation. There is little doubt that, much earlier than 1819 A.D., some brahmins, though probably less than seven, were employed for this work. Each one of them is now paid Rs. 7/- per mensem ; prior to 1935 A.D. each was given barely Rs. 1/12/-. In addition, then as now, each has been getting 3 blocks (kaṭṭis) of the cooked rice.

2. *Garland-makers :* Among the early employees of the temple the garland-makers formed another group. The earliest Śucīndram epigraph which refers to endowments for the supply of flower-garlands and the maintenance of flower-gardens is that of the 7th year of Cōḻan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya. Assuredly this does not by any means imply that garlands were used in the temple only from the 10th century A.D. From the start, one or more persons must have been employed for providing the temple with flower-garlands. In the initial stages, the remuneration was granted in the shape of paddy by the settlement of a plot of land. Those who bestowed endowments for the supply of garlands settled land on the garland-maker to meet the cost of the service.

At present, eight members of the Śaiva Veḷḷāḷa group are entrusted with the supply of all the garlands required for the pagoda. Now the garland-makers are each paid a low monthly remuneration of Rs. 2/-. About 1922 A.D. there were 5 garland-makers; and they were paid Rs. 2/- each. Their ancestors rendering the service, were governed by Kārāṇmai right in force before 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.) and were remunerated by the settlement of land, and in addition, they were given a share of the cooked rice. Since occasional irregularity in the supply of garlands came to the notice of the authorities in 1935 A.D., a supervisor, designated 'Mēlvicārippu', has been appointed on a pay of Rs. 6/- per mensem.

3. *Nandāvanakkār :* The work of picking flowers and maintaining flower-gardens was perhaps entrusted to the garland-makers themselves in the earlier stages.[43] The above-mentioned inscription of the 7th year of Cōḻan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya specifies the grant of land not only for the supply of garlands but also for the maintenance of a flower-garden. There is no means of determing the time when a group of Nandāvanakkār appeared as distinct from garland-makers. However, the Ācārakkaṇakku of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) specifies the two groups separately. Now the Nandāvanakkār are seven in number, and their monthly pay is Rs. 5 per head. Prior to 1935 A.D., they were paid Rs. 1/6/6- each.

4. *Dēvadāsis :* Perhaps, no class of the temple establishment is so unique as that of the Dēvadāsis. They constituted an important group of servants attached to the temple. When they first appeared in Śucīndram, what their duties and privileges were and how they influenced the social life of the place are all questions of absorbing interest, and they deserve to be treated at length.[44]

5. *Kaḻakam :* After the discontinuance of the Dēvadāsi system in 1930 A.D., the duties performed by them in the past have been entrusted to men-servants called 'kaḻakam'. Four members, who are usually of the Dēvaraḍiyār caste, are appointed as 'kaḻakam'. The work allotted to them comprises the cleaning of the pūjā vessels, the balipīṭhams (the raised platform of granite, upon which, cooked rice is offered as bali) and the flight of steps at the entrance of the shrines. Besides, the kaḻakam are to carry lamps in front of the Śrībali processions at night. The Dēvadāsis held their position by virtue of a kārāṇmai right; the kaḻakam,

43. In certain early South Indian temples the Nandāvanam was left to the charge of the arcakas. See, for example, A.R.E. 6 of 1896.

44. See Infra Chapter IX, Section 9.

on the other hand, are but temporary employees. They are appointed by the Dēvasvam Department, as and when vacancies arise. Each kaḻakam is paid a monthly remuneration of Rs. 10/- and two blocks of cooked rice.

Beyond doubt, the designation of 'kaḻakam', as at present used, is Malayāḷi in origin. In the temples of North Travancore and Cochin, the 'kaḻakam' are the servants entrusted with work like the making of garlands and cleaning of the pūjā vessels. They are appointed from among the members of the Vāriyar community. Evidently, the post of 'kaḻakam' was introduced after the pattern found in the Malayāḷi temples.

6. *Drummers, Pipers and Conch-blowers:* At a fairly early time itself, the temple-establishment must have included a group of drummers. The 'tattaḷikoṭṭuvār' occurring in the Taṇḍantōṭṭam plates appears to be a reference to drummers. But the same term, figuring in later Pallava inscriptions, probably included the musical troupe of the temple. For example, in the inscription of Mānasarpa Visṇugṛha belonging to the time of Kampavarman, it is stated that 16 men were appointed as tattaḷikoṭṭuvār.[45] But, since 16 men are not likely to have been employed as drummers, the probability is that the group included besides drummers, also pipers, trumpet-players, and buglers. Further, the mention of 'Tiruppalikoṭṭuvār' in an epigraph of Vairamēghavarman[46] is obviously identical with the 'Śrībalikoṭṭuvār',[47] viz., those who play on the drum during the Śrībali. Above all, there are the celebrated Tanjāvūr inscriptions of Rāja Rāja which mention no less than 72 drummers of various types, 7 pipers, 5 pakkavādyar or members belonging to the troupe of pipers and two conch-blowers besides several others. Many more early instances of the employment of this section of the 'temple parivāram' are available.

Unfortunately, the exact time when the drummers and pipers were introduced into Śucīndram is not possible to be ascertained. If the known facts relating to South Indian temples furnish any indication on the matter, it may be suggested that the nucleus of this group must have appeared in Śucīndram by the time of Rāja Rāja. There is little doubt that the entire retinue, now found attached to the temple, existed before 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.), for the Accounts of that year refer to the whole lot of them. At present, three sets of pipers are employed in the service

45. S I I, Vol. VII, p 265.

46. A. R E 152 of 1916.

47. The Tiruvalla Plates prove beyond doubt that the two groups are identical. See T. A. S., II, p. 196.

of the pagoda. Including the drummers and time-keepers, the group consists of 16 persons. Besides these, there are the conch-blowers, the buglers like those who blow the 'Vīrakkombū', those who play on musical instruments like 'Kaimaṇi', 'Ekkāḷam' and 'Karaḍivādyam'. The pipers, drummers as well as the conch-blowers belong to the class called Pāraśavas or Uvaccans. They form the counterparts of the Mārāns in the temples to the north of Trivandrum.[48] The original Pāraśavas were, as pointed out by Thurston, born of brahmin fathers and śūdra mothers.[49] At present, three families of the class are employed in the Śucīndram pagoda. They are in charge of the pañcavādyams or five kinds of instrumental music.[50] It is a member of this group who performs the śānti in the Kāḷi shrine, the Munnūṟṟunaṅkai Amman Kōil. This shrine is believed to have had a very early origin. Therefore, the view that the Pāraśava as an employee of the temple appeared at an early date, is strengthened.

The pay of the different members of the group varies. Now the chief piper gets as much as Rs. 25/- per mensem, though the conch-blower, who serves also as the cymbol-beater, receives only Rs. 4/-. Before 1935 A.D., their remuneration was much less; but they were then entitled to get a share of the Neivēdya rice.

7. *Masons:* Fifteen labourers, skilled in masonry work, are employed in the temple on a permanent footing. Their normal work is to attend to necessary repairs to any structure in the pagoda, to erect pandals on the occasions of the Utsavas and also to carry the Vāhana or the vehicle of the principal deity in connection with the Utsavas. Regarding no other class of employees do we find such a wide disparity in the Accounts of different years. The Accounts of 862 M.E. (1687 A.D.) do not specify the number of labourers, though they record that, every month, 7 kōṭṭās of paddy in the aggregate were paid to the masons. The Accounts of 906 and 916 M.E. state that 18 men were employed permanently and that some more were engaged for specific pieces of service during festive occasions. The records of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) also show the same number of permanent employees as masons, but it is from 1097 M.E. (1922 A.D.) onwards that the annual Accounts consistently refer to

48. That the members of this class were not Mārāns is perhaps an additional pointer indicating their appearance in Śucīndram earlier than the advent of the Yōgakkār

49. See 'Mahābhārata', Anusāsanika Parva, Chapter 48, Verse 5.

50. 'Pañcavādyam' is also used as a generic expression denoting the various kinds of instrumental music.

the employment of 15 masons, one chief and 14 assistants. Evidently, the volume of work demanded of them varied from time to time, and hence the disparity. In 1935 A.D., the masons were each paid Rs. 2/5/- only and the chief mason Rs. 2/15/-. Since 1935 A.D., the 14 masons are each paid Rs. 6/- and the chief mason Rs. 7/-.

8. *Ānavāl* : A group of people employed for several kinds of external service connected with the pagoda is known as Ānavāl. They belong to the caste of Vairāvi, generally held to occupy a social status below that of the Veḷḷāḷas. This seems strange, because Ānavāḷ is the designation generally applied to brahmin managers of the temples.[51] However, the principal duty of the Vairāvi Ānavāḷ of Śucīndram is to keep watch at each of the three main door-ways of the pagoda. In connection with the Utsavas, besides several odd kinds of service, the Vairāvi Ānavāḷ are also entrusted with the staging of the execution of the Jaina disputants.[52]

The history of the Ānavāl at Śucīndram is interesting. Doubtless, they have been connected with the temple for several centuries now. A temple record, dated the 19th Puraṭṭāśi 919 M.E. (1743 A.D.), which is a copy of the variōla or deed of terms executed by the Vairāvis with the Śrīkāryamceyvār, furnishes certain interesting details. The document shows that early in the morning they were to be ready at the temple, and meeting the Srīkaryampillai (the manager), were to receive instructions concerning the day's work and discharge it satisfactorily. It adds that any remissness in their duty would result in their loss of the land which had been settled on them free of tax for rendering the service. This record affords proof of the association of the Vairāvis with the pagoda in the 18th century A.D.; perhaps, it started considerably earlier.

A copper plate, still in the possession of a Vairāvi at Akkarai, a suburb of Śucīndram, tells us more about them. The plate records that certain Yōgapparadēśis (religious mendicants) were appointed as Ānavāḷ of the temple in Śucīndram on 5th Alpaśi 621 M.E. (1445 A.D.). That the Yōgapparadēśis are identical with the Vairāvi group is supported by local tradition. The specific functions allotted to them down to the present day strengthens this view. The record further states that the Yōgapparadēśis were to conduct certain festivals in the temple with the income accruing from lands allotted to them for the purpose. Obviously, this refers to the staging of the theological triumph of the Śaivites over the

51. T. A. S., V, p. 168. The ruler's personal attendants, who are generally of the brahmin caste, are also called ānavāḷ.

52. See Infra Chapter VIII.

Jains. It is learnt from the plate that the number of Yōgapparadēśis appointed as ānavāḷ was twenty three. The Travancore Epigraphist Ramanatha Aiyar, however, questions the reliability of the date ascribed to the plate since it has imported a supernatural element. It states that the orders emanated from the god Śucīndramuḍaiya Nainār, who emerged from the cluster of bamboos, and from Tentiruvēṅgaḍa Emperumān. But, this reason for discrediting the reliability of the record seems hardly convincing. It has to be urged, that the legend regarding the emergence of Śucīndramuḍaiya Nainār from the bamboo trees had become firmly imbedded in the body of traditions of the temple by the 15th century A D. A clear proof of this fact is afforded by the piece of sculpture in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa vividly illustrating the theme. It is needless to repeat that this Maṇḍapa was constructed before 1479 A.D.

The only other ground stressed by the epigraphist is that the formation of the letters is more modern than the pattern common in the 15th century. As he himself admits, he has seen only an inked copy of the plate. If he had taken the trouble of perusing the original, which is preserved carefully even now by a Vairāvi gentleman at Akkarai, Ramanatha Aiyar's view might have been different. As far as it is possible to judge from the original, the formation of the letters does not appear to differ remarkably from the pattern of the 15th century.

The service of the Vairāvis as Ānavāḷ was thus regulated by a Kārāṇmai deed; and, it was respected by the authorities of the temple till 1811 A.D. With the assumption of the control of the pagoda and its property by the Government in that year, the number of Vairāvis employed was reduced to three. Three Vairāvis continue to be in service at present, and they are given a monthly remuneration of Rs. 3/4/-.

9. *Taṇḍal :* The current acquittance roll of the temple includes four men employed as Taṇḍal, one for measuring rice, another for paddy and two others for doling out condiments, oil and other requirements from the Store. Their remuneration is low, by the revision of 1935 A.D. it has been raised from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 5/- per mensem. Beginning from 916 M.E. (1741 A.D) the Accounts mention the Taṇḍals; and, their duties were much the same as they have been in more recent times. Though no inscription of Śucīndram refers specifically to this class of employees, there is little doubt that they were functioning from an early date. An inscription of Rāja Rāja Cōla and another of Kōda Kēraḷavarman, both of Śucīndram, reveal that the temple itself maintained the units of mea-

surements like the bhaṭṭārakkal and ceppu nāḻi for the purpose of measuring paddy and rice respectively. That the post of Taṇḍal was common in other parts of South India from early days, is proved by an inscription of 1220 A.D. found in Muniyūr.[53]

10. *Palavēlaikkārar :* Four men, invariably belonging to the Dēvaradiyār class of Śucīndram, are appointed for lighting the lamps in the various places of the pagoda However, they continue to be described as 'palavēlaikkārar'. Reference to the class of servants, designated by the above name, is found in the Accounts of the temple as early as 862 M.E. (1687 A.D.), and in the Kaimukku records of the 17th century A.D. Although it is not possible to determine the date when the designation was first used, it is obvious that servants discharging similar work were employed from an early period. Probably, to start with, some men were engaged for rendering various kinds of odd services. Perhaps, that explains the peculiar designation as 'Palavēlakkāran', the 'man of sundry work'. In recent times, the specific function allotted to them is the lighting of lamps. The service is not hereditary; vacancies are filled up as they arise. Each member of the group is now given a monthly pay of Rs. 5/- and 2 blocks of cooked rice every day; before 1935 A.D., in addition to the rice, each was paid only 14 annas per mensem.

11. *Servants for cleaning vessels :* Four men, invariably of the Dēvaraḍiyār caste, are employed for the cleaning of the huge vessels used for cooking in the temple. Three men appear to have been appointed for this purpose before 1922 A.D. The Accounts of 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.) also show only three employees under this head. Obviously, the increase in the volume of work to be done by them must have been responsible for the addition of one more servant to the group. Prior to 1935 A.D., each of these was paid a monthly remuneration of Rs. 5/- which has been reduced to Rs. 4/- by the revision effected in 1935 A.D.

12. *Sweepers :* Yet another part of the duty discharged by the Dēvadāsis has also been passed over to male employees. This is the sweeping and cleaning of the Śrībalipura, the courtyards and the various halls in the pagoda. Five men, usually of the Dēvaraḍiyār caste, are now appointed to attend to this work which fell to the lot of the Muṟak-

53. A. R. E. 610 of 1902. In non-brahmadēya villages, too, the Tandal or Tandalkāran was an employee of the village Collecting from individuals their dues to the common village fund, rendering odd kinds of service to the villagers on occasions of important domestic events like marriage and death, formed their main duties

kuḍi members among the Dēvadāsis in days of old. Of the five sweepers now employed, four are charged with the sweeping and cleaning of the Śrībalipura, the Maṇḍapas and the courtyards within the temple, while the other is entrusted with the sweeping of the courtyard near the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, the Nāṭakasāla and the entrance to the pagoda. The service of the sweepers does not stand on a hereditary basis. The current acquittance roll shows that each of the former group is paid Rs. 5/-, and each of the latter only Rs. 3/- per mensem. Each one of them is entitled to get two blocks of cooked rice every day. Their remuneration has not been altered by the general revision of 1935 A.D.

Over and above the host of employees mentioned above, there were several others about whom little is known. Among these are the astrologer, a 'Tiruvāḻi', probably the 'keeper of the seal', the person who recites Kaṭṭiyam, the guard of the temple cars, and the watchman of the temple tank. The total number of employees according to the present acquittance roll is 114, and the total amount paid to them monthly comes to Rs. 870/10/-.

CHAPTER VIII

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS

S*ources of information*: Several inscriptions speak of endowments for the conduct of particular pūjās (ceremonial rites of worship) in the temple. But, while they mention the articles to be supplied for the performance of those pūjās, they do not specify the time or manner of conducting them. The palm-leaf records, on the other hand, provide more details. The earliest of the available records belongs to 862 M.E. (1687 A.D.), and the data it furnishes about the various pūjās are surprisingly similar to the practices adopted at present. It appears that, so far as the observance of the rituals goes, there is a striking constancy throughout the past. Perhaps, considerably earlier than the 17th century, too, the pūjās were conducted in much the same way. At any rate, from about the 13th century A.D., by which time, the Malayāḷi arcakas and managers had appeared, a more or less similar system of worship seems to have been adopted. Therefore, a survey of the pūjās as observed at present, together with a study of the particular ceremonies introduced at various dates, will give us an idea of the system of worship in vogue in the past.

Pūjā: Since the performance of the pūjā forms the principal daily ceremony, it is necessary to know its main characteristics. A pūjā is

the worship of a deity accompanied by certain formalities and offerings [1] In the South Indian temple, cooked rice is the principal item offered as oblation (akṣata pūjā). Often, fruits, varieties of sweets, and pudding are also included. The offer of the oblation is followed by the waving of incense (dhūpa pūjā) and of one or more illuminated lamps (dīpa pūjā). The entire ritual is accompanied by the chanting of hymns and mantras by the officiant. The spoken word, be it prose or verse, is the constant companion of ritual action, a kind of spiritual agent directing it to its goal [2]

A pūjā, as it is performed in Śucīndram, comprises three divisions or stages. (1) The first is *Pīṭha pūjā* or the invocation to the pedestal on which the image rests. (2) Next is *Mūrti pūjā* or the invocation to the deity symbolized by the linga or image. This Mūrti pūjā is said to commence with 'āvāhanam', which means that the invocation springs from the arcaka's inner soul (jīvātmā). This pūjā is also called Āvaraṇapūjā, since the image is conceived as comprising five divisions or angams, and pūjā is offered to each of these in turns. (3) Finally, there comes what is called *Prasanna pūjā*. This is believed to be the invocation at the time when the deity, pleased with the earlier pūjās, is cheerful. It is at the moment when the Prasanna pūjā takes place, that the Dīpārādhana (the waving of the lamp) is expected to be performed. The technique of the pūjā now observed in Śucīndram is similar to that found in the West Coast temples.

A. *Ceremonies in the Fore-Noon*

I. Paḷḷiuṇartal : The daily routine of ceremonies in the Śucīndram pagoda may be said to begin at 3 a.m. when, to the booming of the conch by the Pāraśava, the doors of the temple are opened. The officiating priests, the Mēl-Śāntikkār of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam,[3] as well as the

1. Among the views advanced regarding the etymology of the word, 'pūjā', J. Carpentier's derivation of 'pūjā' from the Tamil 'pūśu' meaning 'to smear' (sandal paste) seems far-fetched. M. Collins's view (Dravidic Studies, No. III, University of Madras, p. 59) that it is derived from 'pū' = flower, plus 'cey' = to do, meaning thus, a flower-ritual, seems more appropriate. 'Pūjā' appears to have been originally a Dravidian form of worship, just as 'hōma' was Aryan; it is significant that in the Vēdic literature pūjā is not mentioned.

2. " वाग् देवेभ्य यज्ञं वहति " (Sat Brahm 1; 4; 4 2).

3. A couple of Nambūdiris is appointed as the Mēl-Śāntikkār for each month. Each of the two priests performs the pūjā in Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam respectively; but the peculiar custom in vogue is that the two priests alternate their places of service every other day. The popular belief is that Indra performs the

Nambiyār arcaka of the Konrayadināthar shrine, are ready, after their bath, for commencing the round of rituals. Prostrating in front of the garbhagṛha and performing his worship of the deity, the priest devoutly enters his respective shrine.[4]

The dress, jewels and flowers,[5] found on the images, are removed; and then, commences the preparation for the earliest function of the day called Paḷḷiuṇartal. The idea underlying this ceremony is that the god is to be roused from his sleep.[6] After the sounding of the conch, the abhisēkha or the bathing of the image is the next important step connected with Paḷḷiuṇartal. The bathing is done with milk, curd, ghee, honey and the juice of tender coconuts in succession. During the abhisēkha, the arcaka chants Vēdic hymns. The abhiṣēkha is followed by the decking of the images with new clothes, flowers and sandal paste.[7] During the process of decoration, too, the arcaka continues to chant sacred hymns, especially invocations like the Astramantra.

The abhiṣēkha is the prelude to the Neivēdya or the offer of food to the deities. It must be noted that cooked rice does not figure at all as an item in the Neivēdyam offered early morning. Its place is taken by parched rice. Besides, four other items also are offered. They are (1) Trimadhuram (2) Fruits (3) Sugarcandy and (4) Coconut. Trimadhuram literally means three-fold sweet. In fact, it is a salad prepared with plantain fruits, ghee, honey and sugar.

pūjā in the shrine of Sthānumālaya at dead of night, and, lest the priest should see any sign of that, this alternation of the arcakas is said to have been instituted Coupled with this practice is the stringent injunction that the officiating priests should, under no circumstance, reveal any strange feature observed in the garbhagṛha.

4. As in the case of other temples in South India, the officiating priests wear no special costume during the exercise of their sacerdotal functions. Abbe Dubois (Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, p 583) specifically mentions this fact as a strange feature of the Hindu temples. The Nambūdiri arcaka at Śucīndram, like his compeer in the East Coast, wears around his waist a cloth about 7 cubits in length tied up across his thighs, but with this difference that, in the case of the Nambūdiri, the cloth on the two sides is raised up above the thighs, the front part of the cloth alone hanging down

5. The flowers already used for the image is called 'Nirmālya'. Along with holy ashes and saffron, a portion of it is distributed among worshippers.

6. In Śiva temples of the East Coast, this ceremony is called 'Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci', while in Vaiṣnava temples, it is known as 'Tiruvanandal' or 'Viśvarūpasēvai'.

7. In the case of the linga at Vadakkēdam and at Konrayadi, no cloth is worn, silver masks or aṅgis adorn them

II. Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci : An interesting combination of the East and West Coast practices is seen in the second ceremony of the morning, which figures on most days. This is called 'Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci', and is similar to what appears in the temples of the East Coast as the first pūjā of the morning. In Śucīndram, both 'Paḷḷiuṇartal' and 'Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci' appear. But, whereas 'Pāḷḷiuṇartal' figures every day, 'Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci' in the form of a special pūjā is conducted only on specified days of the month, for which, endowments have been made in the past.

So far as the details of the ceremony are concerned, there appears the same round of routine over again, the removal of the flowers and sandal paste, the abhiṣēkha and the offering of oblations. On all the days of the month of Dhanu or Mārkaḷi, too, Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci is conducted. In each of the other months, on an average, for twenty days, determined by Nakṣatras or natal stars, it succeeds the preliminary Palliuṇartal. It must be observed that, on all the days when Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci figures, it takes place in the three important shrines of Vaḍakkēḍam, Tekkēḍam and Konṟayaḍi.

III. Uṣa Pūjā or Udayamārtāṇḍa Pūjā : Immediately succeeding the Paḷḷiuṇartal or the Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci, as the case may be, occurs the morning oblation called the Uṣa Pūjā, which is also known as Udayamārtāṇḍa Pūjā. This offering to the deity takes place just before sunrise or 6 a.m.[8] The rituals of the Uṣa Pūjā are not very different from those of the pūjās conducted earlier in the morning. The abhiṣēkha with milk, curd, ghee, honey and the juice of tender coconuts, precedes the Neivēdyam. In the case of this Neivēdyam, the only distinguishing feature is that in the place of the parched rice, the cooked variety is offered.

It is needless to state that the alternative name, 'Udayamārtāṇḍa Pūjā', denotes the person in whose name it was instituted. The inscription of 712 M.E. (1537 A.D.)[9] shows that a Udayamārtāṇḍan Sandhi was established by Venṟumankoṇḍa Bhūtala Vīra Rāma Varma in honour of his brother and predecessor, Udayamārtāṇḍa. But, an intriguing circumstance is that, about fifty years prior to the above-mentioned endowment, another Vēṇāḍ king, 'Iravivarma Tiruppāppūr Mūtta Tiruvaḍi', is stated

8. 'Uṣa' denotes day-break, hence, the name 'Usa Pūjā' indicates the time of its occurrence. The 'Uttarakāraṇa Āgama' states that its termination should coincide with sun-rise.

9. T. A S., IV, pp. 102-03.

to have made a gift of land for the conduct of Usa Pūjā.[10] Obviously therefore, the two Pūjās, 'Udayamārtāṇḍan Sandhi' and 'Usa Pūjā' were different from each other, to start with. What seems probable is that, 'Udayamārtāṇḍan Sandhi' was originally intended to be performed some time later in the day than the Uṣa Pūjā. Subsequently, the two seem to have been combined, making the Usa Pūjā a grand ceremony. The first part of the name 'Udayamārtānda', i.e., 'Udaya' denotes 'rising', and perhaps, the later authorities decided that it was also to be performed before sun-rise.

Namaskāram Feeding : The Uṣa Pūjā is conducted in Vaḍakkēḍam, Tekkēḍam and Konṟayaḍi. It is immediately after the Usa Pūjā that the Namaskāram Feeding of 18 brahmins takes place. But, neither of the inscriptions, referred to above, makes any mention of this. In fact, the epigraph of 712 M.E. states that the Neivēdya rice is to be given to a Dēvadāsi. This suggests that the provision for the feeding of brahmins was made at a later date. A palm-leaf record reveals that, on 5th Cittirai 933 M.E. (1758 A.D.) one Rāmakrṣṇa Aiyar, who lived in South Street in Śucīndram, endowed property for feeding some brahmins after the Uṣa Namaskāram. But the number of persons to be fed is not found specified in the document; presumably, it was eighteen.

IV. Dhāra Pūjā : About half an hour after the Uṣa Pūjā, there commences the 'Dhāra Pūjā', which is really a ceremony of anointing the image at Vadakkēḍam. Fresh cold water is brought in a huge silver pot,[11] specially preserved for the purpose. The inscription engraved on the pot shows that it was presented to the temple to be employed in connection with the Dhāra Pūjā by Śrī Viśākham Tirunāḷ Mahārāja of Travancore (1880-85 A.D.). The inscription does not, however, specify the date of the donation; hence, nothing more can be stated than that the Dhāra Pūjā was instituted some time between 1880 and 1885 A.D.[12]

On the day of the natal star (Vaiśākha) of every month, instead of water, milk is used to anoint the images. Any private individual, too, can arrange for a special abhiṣēkha of milk to either or both of the images of Vaḍakkēḍam or Tekkēḍam, by providing for the necessary expenses. On the occasion of a royal visit to the temple, this special abhiṣēkha is

10. Kōda Kēralavarma's endowment in 320 M.E. (1145 A.D.) was for a Pūjā in the morning (T. A. S., IV, p. 19.) But it is difficult to identify the particular Pūjā instituted by him.

11. The pot is called 'Dhārakiḍāram', obviously denoting the purpose, 'dhāra' or bath, for which it is used.

12. The Dhāra Pūjā is now known also as 'Yetirta Pūjā', because it corresponds to the 'Yetirta Pūjā' of the temples of the Malayāla Dēśa.

performed. After the anointing of the image by water or by milk, there takes place the pūjā; and, the chanting of mantras is continued throughout the abhiṣēkha and the pūjā.

V. Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā : After the Dhāra Pūjā, the Mēl-Śānti Nambūdiris of Vadakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam retire to their residence. Taking rest for a while, they return by 8-30 a.m. when the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā commences. It is otherwise known as *Pantīraḍi,* which denotes the time of the day as measured by one's shadow. Pantīraḍi or twelve steps of one's own shadow correspond to the time from 8-30 a.m. to 9-30 a.m.[13] The distinctive feature of this ceremony is that, the Neivēdyam offered is not of the ordinary type. It is a sumptuous meal with diverse side-dishes.[14] Along with cooked rice, ten varieties of vegetable curries figure, besides a sweet pudding prepared out of rice, Bengal gram, sugarcandy, coconut juice etc. Finally comes the dessert in the shape of a fruit salad. The entire fare is served in front of the Vaḍakkēdam deity on a magnificent golden plate, which weighs not less than 1000 kalañju (about the weight of 650 sovereigns). The huge circular plate contains on its edges ten well-shaped depressions, which hold the curries. At the centre of the plate is served one iḍangaḻi of cooked rice. In Tekkēḍam, there is a plate made of silver, with its central portion gold-plated. The total weight of this plate is 500 kalañju. It may be mentioned that, so far as the food offered as Neivēdya is concerned, no difference is noticeable between Vadakkēdam and Tekkēḍam.

About the time of the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā, twelve brahmins are feasted on an identical menu, ten on behalf of Vaḍakkēdam and two of Tekkēḍam. The feeding of the brahmins in connection with the 'Mṛsṭānnam' and 'Namaskāram' takes place on the corridor running around the first prākāra.[15] Great care is taken in the matter of adjusting the time of the actual Mṛṣṭānnam feeding of the brahmins, for, the idea is that it should synchronize with the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā. By the time that the Pūjā commences food is served for the brahmins. Soon after the Dīpārādhana, the Śāntikkār of both the shrines come out to the corridor with water in silver kiṇḍi (cruse). They pour a little water into the out-stretched

13. The Sucīndram practice strictly conforms to the time. In some other temples the Pantīradi pūjā takes place at 10 or 11 a m. In the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple, Trivandrum, it appears at 11 a.m. (See Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 76). In the temples at Cochin, the time of this pūjā is 10 a.m (Cochin Castes and Tribes Vol. II, p. 248). The rule is that in temples where 5 pūjās are performed, 'Pantīradi' must be finished by 9 a.m.

14. The word Mrsṭānnam itself signifies an excellent meal.

15. This practice of feeding brahmins within the precincts of the temple is uncommon in the pagodas of the East Coast.

palm of the brahmins, who commence eating only thereafter. The Śāntikkār immediately get back to their respective shrines and perform the waving of dhūpa or incense, and this marks the final termination of the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā.

Who instituted the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā in the temple ? The available data clearly indicate that the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā and the Pantīraḍı Pūjā were two separate entities, introduced at two different dates. Rāmavarma's inscription of 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.) records his endowment towards the performance of the Cempakarāman Pūjā before Pantīraḍı. Arrangement for feeding only six brahmins in connection with this pūjā is specified. There can be no doubt that it is the Cempakarāman Pūjā which has come to be known as the Pantīraḍı. While the origin of the Pantīradi Pūjā is thus settled, the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā and the grand feeding of twelve brahmins connected with it appear to have been introduced later. The Pativukkaṇakku of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) speaks of the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā as Bālamārtāṇḍa Kulaśēkharaperumāḷ Pūjā, and mentions in particular the gold and silver plates on which the Mṛṣṭānna Neivēdya is offered.[16] Though the name of Balamārtāṇḍavarma is associated with this offering, the ruler who actually endowed the costly plates and introduced the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā was Rāmavarma Kārtikai Tirunāḷ. The Pativukaṇakku of 994 M.E. itself states that the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā was instituted on 27th Āni 936 M.E. (1761 A.D.). The king's name is not mentioned; but it is perfectly certain that the king was none other than Kārtikai Tirunāḷ. Since his reign, the Cempakarāman Pantīraḍı has been amalgamated with Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā, thus making it a magnificent ceremony.

VI. Śrībali : Immediately after the termination of the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā comes the first Śrībali of the day. Śrībali is the perambulation or taking round of the special Śrībali images of the Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam thrice around the outer prākāra (Śrībalipura) of the temple. During the Śrībali procession, a Turakkār bears the image of Vaḍakkēḍam and another of Tekkēḍam. They are led in the first two rounds by the two Nambūdiri Śāntikkār, who offer the bali viz., cooked rice to the minor

16 The two references in the Pativukkaṇakku are the following .—

(*a*) " ബാലമാർത്താണ്ഡ കുലശേഖരപ്പെരുമാൾ പൂജയിൽ പൊന്നും തളികയിൽ നിവേദ്യം രണ്ടു്. മേൽപ്പടി പൂജയിൽ മിഷ്ടാന്നം വകയ്ക്കു് അഞ്ചുരേപക്കു്."

(*b*) " ബാലമാർത്താണ്ഡ കുലശേഖരപ്പെരുമാൾ പൂജയിൽ വെള്ളിത്തളികയിൽ നിവേദ്യം രണ്ടു്. മേൽപ്പടി പൂജയിൽ മിഷ്ടാന്നം വകയ്ക്കു് അഞ്ചുരേപക്കു്."

deities as well as to the Aṣṭadikpālās and bhūtās or demons. The procession is accompanied by pipers, drummers and lampbearers. In fact, the Śrībali is considered by the Hindu religious treatises as the Nityōtsava or the daily festival. On three occasions during the course of the day, the ceremony of the Śrībali takes place, the first in the morning soon after the Mṛṣṭānna Pūjā, the second after the pūjā at noon, (Ucca Pūjā) and the third in the evening after the Attāḷa Pūjā.

VII Puṣpāñjali Pūjā · After the morning Śrībali comes the 'Puṣpāñjali Pūjā. The name suggests that it was instituted by the celebrated 'Puṣpāñjali Svāmiyār' of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmi temple at Trivandrum,[17] probably about the time when the Śrīmad Dvārakai Emperumān shrine was established i.e., early in the 13th century A.D. The Puspāñjali Pūjā is a simple ceremony, consisting of the offer of Neivēdyam, chanting of mantras and performance of Dīpārādhana.

VIII. 'Śaṅkālabhiṣēkha' A little after the morning Śrībali and the 'Puṣpāñjali Pūjā', occurs a special abhiṣēkha of the Vaḍakkēḍam image. Thirty six times, water is continuously poured on the linga with a gold-covered conch. The 'Śāṅkālabhiṣēkha' is followed by a pūjā and neivēdyam. It may be mentioned here that, in certain temples of the East Coast, there figures the ceremony of 'Sahasraśaṅkālabhiṣēkha' viz., the abhiṣēkha of 1000 times. Perhaps, the practice at Śucīndram is modelled on it, though here, it is definitely on a more modest scale. It is clear that this ceremony was first instituted at Śucīndram by some early Travancore ruler, though his name is not known. Even now, the ruling sovereign's name and his natal star are repeated along with the mantras chanted during the abhiṣēkha on those days of his natal star. Besides, it is noteworthy that the expenses of the Śaṅkālabhiṣēkha and of the accompanying pūjā on those days are met from the privy purse of the Mahārāja.

IX. Pañcagavya and Navakalaśa: Two other kinds of abhisēkha, believed to be specially purificatory in their nature, follow the Śaṅkālabhiṣēkha. They are the Pañcagavya and the Navakalaśa abhiṣēkha. ' Pañcagavya ' denotes literally the five substances derived from the cow, namely, milk, curd, ghee, dung and urine. These elements, particularly the last two, have been always considered by the Hindus as most efficacious agents of purification. It is believed that the ceremony of anointing the image with the Pañcagavya is sufficient to cleanse any impurity.

17. It is noteworthy that the ' Puspāñjali Pūjā ' at Śucīndram and in the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum are expected to take place exactly at the same time His Highness goes to the temple for worship at the time of the 'Puspāñjali Pūjā.'

Immediately succeeding the 'Pañcagavya' is the 'Navakalaśa abhisēkha, which is really the ceremony of pouring over the image sacred water stored in nine vessels. Earlier in the day, a Nambūdiri priest performs an elaborate pūjā to the nine vessels and thus sanctifies the water. On the completion of the pūjā, the anointing of the image with this sacred water is done. After the termination of the Pañcagavya and Navakalaśa abhiṣēkha, a neivēdyam of cooked rice is offered once again.

X. Ucca Pūjā About 12 noon, comes the mid-day pūjā, which is doubtless a grand ceremony. The abhisēkha, neivēdya and the other familiar features appear, but all on a more elaborate scale than earlier in the day. In addition to the items offered as oblation, a porridge of milk is included. From the Accounts of the temple, it is learnt that the endowment for this offering was made by the Āṟṟuṅgal Mūtta Tampurān in 1014 M.E. (1839 A.D.) in the reign of Rāmavarma Svāti Tirunāḷ. The dhūpa (burning of incense) and dīpārādhana (waving of lights) accompany the offer of oblations. During the course of the ceremony, pipers, drummers, buglers and flutists are in attendance. Held as particularly sacred, the Ucca Pūjā attracts a large number of devotees. Worship at the time of the Ucca Pūjā on Mondays (Sōmavāra) is believed to be specially sanctimonious, and numerous people from the neighbouring villages attend the ceremony. It is important to remember that the Ucca Pūjā is conducted in all the shrines of the pagoda. Soon after the Ucca Pūjā is over, 18 brahmins are fed at the corridor of the first prākāra. This meal, however, quite unlike the Mṛṣṭānnam, is simple and rather coarse; a single vegetable curry and a chutney prepared with chillies constitute the only accessories to rice.

XI. Tirumañjanam: Next, on certain days of the month, there appears in Vadakkēḍam the ceremony known as 'Nācciyār Pūjā'. It is a ceremony exclusively for Śrī Pārvati Amman, the Dēvī of the temple. Originally, it was described as 'Tiruvātirai Nācciyār Pūjā', because, it was celebrated on the Tiruvātirai natal star. Now, it figures on as many as 17 out of the 27 natal stars.

The silver image of the Dēvī, 'Umayammainācciyār', is brought to the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa and placed on a pedestal. The image is then anointed with gingelly oil, and smeared with turmeric powder, which is followed by an abhiṣēkha with pure water. When the turmeric powder is washed down by the abhiṣēkha, the water is yellow in colour, in consequence of which, it is spoken of as 'Tirumañjanīr'; in fact, the cere-

mony, 'Tirumañjanam', itself owes its name to this circumstance. The image is thereafter decked with a new cloth and fresh garlands. Dīpārādhana appears as the finishing touch to the ceremony, after which, the image is taken back to its permanent place.

In Tekkēḍam also, a similar ceremony is conducted about the same time. It is described as 'Tekkēḍam Ciṟappu'; doubtless, it forms but the counterpart of the Tirumañjanam of Vaḍakkēḍam. The Utsava images of Viṣṇu and Dēvī are brought to the Maṇḍapa in front of the garbhagṛha and the same formalities as in the case of Tirumañjanam are gone through.

Tirumañjanam, as conducted in Śucīndram, is peculiar ; it differs in important details from the practice in the East Coast temples In the latter, the ceremony of Tirumañjanam denotes merely the abhisēkha of the image with fresh water brought from the river or well, and it takes place just prior to the early morning pūjā. The Purāṇic idea underlying Tirumañjanàm is that, every night, after the Ardhayāma (night) pūjā and before the deity (Śiva) enters his sleeping apartment, Gaṅgādēvī descends from the crown of his head and becomes mixed with the other tīrthās of the Earth. Early in the morning, it is for restoring Gaṅgādēvī back to her seat on the Jaṭāmakuṭa of Śiva that the ceremony of fetching water from the adjoining river or well and anointing the Lord with it is believed to be conducted.[18] In Śucīndram, the Tirumañjanam is performed after the Ucca Pūjā, probably because the Ardhayāma Pūjā does not figure here. And the 'Tekkēḍam Ciṟappu' appears to have been introduced in conformity with the Vaḍakkēḍam ceremony.

When this is over, the Ucca Śrībali procession takes place, and with it, the rituals of the forenoon come to an end.

B. *Ceremonies in the Evening*

By about 1 p.m., the doors of the shrines are closed. From 1 to 4-30 p.m , there is a lull in the activities of the temple, and the entire pagoda presents a silent sombre appearance. During this part of the day, particularly in the Summer months, several men of the village as well as visitors from outside are seen resting either in the Śrībalipuras or in the Gōpuravātal. At about 4-30 p.m. is heard the boom of the Śaṅkhu (the conch), the clarion call for the commencement of the evening ceremonies. Shortly after, the pipers and drummers play their role; the devotees and pilgrims appear; and once again the hum and bustle start.

18. See "Sri Parārta Nitya Pūjā Viti" in Tamil by Aghōraśivācāriyār, Section on Tirumañjanam pp 38 to 40.

I. The Evening Abhisēkha · The same Nambūdiri Śāntikkār and the Nambiyār who officiated earlier in the day, appear before the respective shrines. Prostrating in front of the shrine, each enters the garbhagṛha where he has to perform the evening duty. The Nirmālya, i.e., the sandal paste and flowers found on the image, are removed. The abhiṣēkha, or anointing the image with fresh water, follows.

II. Puṣpāñjali and Dīpārādhana . As soon as the abhisēkha is over, in the Vadakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam shrines, there occurs the arcana or showering of flowers, Puspāñjali, accompanied by the chanting of mantras. This lasts for nearly 15 minutes, and immediately following it, appears the neivēdyam. Among the things offered as oblation, in addition to the common items, there figures a sweet pudding (Pāyasam). This Puspāñjali and the accompanying Dīpārādhana have been instituted by a Travancore king. Local tradition associates them with the name of the celebrated ruler, Bālamārtāṇḍavarma (1729-58 A.D.), who is said to have instituted these ceremonies in commemoration of his triumph over his enemies.

In Konṟayaḍi, too, the evening Dīpārādhana is performed. Regarding the neivēdyam, there is a variation from the practice in Vadakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam; in place of the pudding, tinai (flour of a millet) mixed with sugarcandy is offered. The expenses for this item are met from the Dēvasvam funds and not from any special endowment.

III. Attāḻa Pūjā : Following the evening Dīpārādhana, which is over by 6 p.m., arcanas on behalf of private individuals are offered. These arcanas may take the shape of mere chanting of mantras or offer of coconuts, plantain fruits etc. Besides, special offerings like puddings or cakes may be arranged for. The expenses of all these special arcanas are met by the individuals concerned. The Dēvasvam authorities have now fixed a scheduled rate for the various kinds of arcanas.

At about 7 p.m. commences the Attāḻa or Night Pūjā. The same round of ceremonies is repeated. The abhiṣēkha, the oblation, the Dhūpa and Dīpārādhana, accompanied by the chanting of mantras, all follow in succession. The rows of lamps in front of the shrines as well as in the Maṇḍapas are all lighted, and their glow adds to the splendour of the occasion. Following the Dīpārādhana in the main shrines, pūjā takes place in all the minor ones. On the termination of the Attāḻa Pūjā, the third and the last Śrībali procession appears. Just before the commencement of the Śrībali, Samskṛit verses, known as Kaṭṭiyam, which are taken

from Śaṅkarācārya's Stōtra as found in the Sthalapurāṇa, is recited. The recitation takes place first near Konṟayaḍi and then in front of Vaḍakkēḍam. About the same time, the Ōtuvār, the chorister, recites hymns from the sacred Tamil works of Dēvāram, Tiruvācakam, Tiruppallāṇḍu and Tiru-iśaippa. This is done in front of the four doorways of the Śrībalipuras in succession. Further, beginning from the commencement of the Evening Dīpārādhana, down to the termination of the Attāḷa Śrībali, a party of musicians, sitting in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa sing devotional songs. Besides, a group of eight men accompanies the Śrībali procession singing sacred hymns.

Śāntikkār : An account of the pūjā in the temple may not be complete without a mention of the particular class of Śāntikkār assigned to the various shrines. The Mēl-Śāntikkār, who perform worship in Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēdam are Nambūdiris The Kīḻ-Śānti Pōṟṟis are the Śāntikkār in the shrines of Kailāsattu Mahādēva, Aramvaḷattamman, Ganapati (Brahmarūpa Vināyakar), Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar, the Sākṣi Gaṇapati, Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar, Subrahmaniasvāmy, Garuḍālvār, Kāla Bhairavar, Mākkāḷai, Rāmasvāmy Kōil and the group of Jayantīśvarattu shrines. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi or his assistants perform śānti in the Sabhāpati, Sucīndaperumāḷ, Kaṅkāḷanāthar, Cēravātal Śāsta, and Indra Vināyakar shrines and for the Dvārapālakas in front of Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. The Nambiyār officiates as the priest of Konṟayaḍināthar, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the Citṛa Sabha and the Gōpuravātal shrines.

The performance of śānti in the principal shrines by Nambūdiris is a feature which distinguishes the Sucīndram temple from the others of South Travancore, where either Pōṟṟis or Nambiyārs play the role. The Nambūdiris, who perform the śānti in Sucīndram are natives of three villages, Iriñjālakkuda, Peruvanam and Śukapuram, the last being located in the Ponnāni Taluk of South Malabār and the former two in the Cochin State. The Nambūdiri families of these villages are at present rich landed magnates. For centuries they have been associated with the priest-craft of the Sucīndram temple.

Even now, it is obligatory on every male Nambūdiri of these three villages to take the Avarōdham (initiation in temple service) and perform the śānti in Sucīndram at least for a day. This is held to be absolutely essential for the maintenance of their social status. Even the Aṣṭāgrattil Āḍhyānmār, viz., the learned men of the eight leading houses, who occupy a high social position, and who do not ordinarily officiate as priests in any temple, are obliged by time-honoured custom to perform

śānti in the Śucīndram pagoda at least for a day. Besides, the six Vaidikas, occupying a higher rank than the Āḍhyānmār, as well as the Vādhyāns of Trichur and Tirunāvāi who hold a still more eminent social status, have nominally to undertake the avarōdham and śānti at Śucīndram.[19] In fact, none but the Tampurākkal, who are members of the very highest family among all the Nambūdiris, are exempted from this prescription.[20]

FESTIVALS

The day-to-day ceremonies are called the Nitya or daily functions; those which occur at certain specified times of the year are known as the Naimittika or occasional ceremonies. Unquestionably, the most important of the Naimittika celebrations are the Mahōtsavas or the great annual festivals. In the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple at Śucīndram, three grand festivals are conducted every year. They are, in the order of their importance, the Mārkaḻi, the Cittirai and the Āvaṇi Utsavas. Celebrated on a magnificent scale, the three festivals are described as Mahōtsavas

A Mahōtsava, according to the Āgamas, should celebrate seven ceremonies; and, all these are most carefully conducted in this temple. They are : (1) The Dhvajārōhaṇa or the hoisting of the flag at the top of the Dhvajastambha. The initial ceremony of the Utsava, the Dhvajārōhaṇa announces the commencement of the festival.

2. Aṅkura or germinating seeds of the Navadhānya, the nine varieties of pulses, in a vessel. Associated also with Hindu marriages, this feature is believed to symbolize growth and prosperity.

3. Mṛgayōtsava (Veṭṭai) : Supposed to go out hunting wild beasts, the god is carried on Vāhana (vehicle) in procession. As suggestive of the hunt, some weapons are placed by the side of the image in the Vāhana; moreover, the procession itself moves very briskly.

4. Śayanōtsava, viz., the ceremony which represents the god sleeping in his bed chamber.

5. Rathōtsava, known also as Yātra Utsava : It symbolizes the god undertaking a tour. In Tamiḻ it is called the Tērōṭṭam, since the deity is taken in procession in a car along the main streets.

19. The religious sovereignty of the West Coast region from Mangalore down to Cape Comorin is believed to be divided between these two Vādhyāns.

20. The Tampurākkal are considered the highest spiritual Gurūs or teachers in Malabār.

6. Bhaktōtsava : This signifies the god's recognition and reward of the truly pious among the devotees.

7. Tīrthavāri Āṛāṭ : This represents the sacred bath of the deity. Unlike the daily abhiṣēkha, this is a pompous celebration ; and, the image is taken in procession to the sacred tank (Teppakkuḷam) for the holy bath.

The above-mentioned ceremonies constitute the irreducible minimum of a Mahōtsava in any temple. By no means does it imply that they are the only celebrations. Indeed, in Śucīndram, several other ceremonies figure in connection with the Mahōtsavas.

Of the three Mahōtsavas in Śucīndram, the most magnificent one is the Mārkaḻi festival (December-January) ; next stands the Cittirai Utsava (April-May). So far as rituals go, there are other differences between the two ; one is that, while in the Mārkāḻi festival the three big cars are employed for the procession on the ninth day, in Cittirai, the Svāmy Tēr, the biggest of the cars, is not used. Apart from this, the Car Festival in Mārkaḻi is more imposing than in Cittirai. However, as a compensating feature, in Cittirai, there appears the grand Teppa Utsava or the floating festival on the 10th night of the Utsava. Nevertheless, it is the Mārkāḻi Utsava which attracts larger crowds of visitors, for, it takes place during the season when peasants and landowners are comparatively free. The harvest starts only late in January. On the other hand, Cittirai sees the commencement of the sowing season, and cultivators are usually very busy during that part of the year.

The least spectacular among the three annual festivals in Śucīndram is the Āvaṇi Utsava (September-October), which is entirely dedicated to Tekkēḍam Perumāḷ or Viṣṇu. Dhvajārōhaṇa takes place on the Vaiśākha Nakṣatra on the Dhvajastambha of Tekkēdam only. All the formal celebrations of the Mahōtsava are observed for the Tekkēḍam image of Viṣṇu. But processions outside the temple do not figure in this Utsava. That explains why vast crowds of people are not attracted to this festival.

The Mārkaḻi Utsava :[21]

The month of Mārkaḻi is very sacred to the Hindus. During this month, the orthodox people get up early in the morning, bathe in the river or tank and offer worship. In the temples, too, pūjā is performed

21. The details of the Mārkāḻi Utsava are described here at some length, for that is the most magnificent of the three festivals; the details in which the other two Utsavas differ from this are specified

before sunrise. The celebration of certain ceremonies during this sacred month appears to have started from early times. The 'Pāvai-nōnbu' described by Āṇḍāḷ, the Vaiṣṇavite mystic poetess, and the 'Kātyāyani Vrata' mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa are all religious observances figuring in sacred Mārkaḻi. The present festival of 'Ārudra Darśanam' or 'Tiruvātirai' in many temples of South India seems to be a relic of such early observances.[22]

The Sthalapurāna states that, on Tiruvātirai day the three Dēvīs, Sarasvati, Lakṣmi and Pārvati undertook a penance in Śucīndram on the suggestion of Nārada, in order to regain their husbands. The tenth and last day of the Mārkāḻi Utsava falling on Tiruvātirai nakṣatra, is said to be a celebration in memory of that penance undertaken by the goddesses.

Ōmkārabalippaḍittaram · Now let us consider the details of the conduct of the Utsava. A unique ceremony, called the Ōmkārabalippaḍittaram, takes place on the evening prior to the day of Dhvajārōhaṇa. Soon after the evening Dīpārādhana, and before the Attāḷa pūjā, the important officers as well as the authorities of the temple assemble in the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa. Among those present are the Tantri, the Mēl-Śāntikkār, the Sthāni, the Sabhakkaṇakkan (accountant of the Sabhai) the Superintendent, the Manager and the Head Clerk of the Dēvasvam. When all have assembled, the Śāntikkāran or the officiating priest of Munnūṟṟunaṅkai (Bhadrakāḷi) shrine[23] appears on the scene and recites a set speech describing the celebrations that are to take place and the deities as well as their vāhanas that are to be carried in procession on each day of the Utsava. He concludes the speech by a prayer that the śāntikkār and the authorities of the temple, as also the public of Śucīndram, should be blessed with long life and prosperity, and finally rings the bell in the Maṇḍapa.[24]

Ōmkārabali : On the night prior to the Dhvajārōhaṇa takes place the Ōmkārabali. At about 12 mid-night, a small group of priests and purōhits headed by the Tantri goes round the main streets chanting mantras and scattering flower and cooked rice. Popularly it is believed that the object of this Ōmkārabali is to bring under control the evil spirits roaming about the streets. The idea of controlling the powers of spirits,

22. See 'Mārkaḻimati māṇbu' in M. Chidambarakurralam Pillay's "Śucindai Mānmiyam" in Tamiḻ.

23. The Śāntikkāran of the Munnūṟṟunaṅkai shrine is a Uvacca. Uvaccas are the priests in Kāli temples.

24 Records show that this ceremony had appeared earlier than 1741 A.D.

Yakṣās, and Kāḷi through the efficacy of mantras appears to have been adopted from the time of Śaṅkarācārya, who is said to have dominated over Kāḷi in Tiruvoṟṟiyūr. Does this idea represent a blending of the Aryan religion with the earlier type of village gods ? In truth, Ōmkārabali is a sacrifice for Kāḷi. The Āgamas prescribe even a regular ten days' festival for Kāḷi prior to the commencement of the Mahōtsava.[25]

Dhvajārōhaṇa . The very first function connected with the Dhvajārōhaṇa is the propitiation offered to the celebrated Śaiva saint Māṇikkavācagar. The Utsava image of Māṇikkavācagar is brought from the Sabhāpati shrine to the Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa and placed behind the Nandi, and a Dīpārādhana is offered. Then follows a Pūjā to the flag or, rather, the rectangular piece of cloth used as the flag. On the cloth is drawn in red colour the figure of a bull and of Pūjā articles like a bell and a vessel for burning incense. The pūjā for Māṇikkavācagar and for the flag is performed by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar. The flag is then fastened to a bamboo frame and taken in procession first through the Śrībalipura and afterwards through the main streets of Śucīndram. At the junctions of streets and in front of minor shrines located in the streets, flowers, water and havis (cooked rice) are offered to the accompaniment of the chanting of mantras.

When the flag is brought back to the temple, it is detached from the bamboo frame and hung up on the western face of the balipīṭha near the Dhvajastambha of Vaḍakkēḍam. A coconut sanctified by pūjā is tied to a corner of the cloth. Then commences an elaborate pūjā by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, who sits facing east in front of the flag. The appurtenances of the pūjā are of silver, while the pitcher holding water is of shining gold. During the entire course of the pūjā, which lasts for over an hour, the pipers and drummers play on their instruments. Three Mārāns, specially engaged for the purpose, play on the Pāṇi, the typical drum associated with temples.[26]

25. A few temples still conform to this theoretical prescription, for example, those at Vrddācalam and Tiruvannāmalai. In several others, only an Ōmkārabali is offered, as at Śucīndram. The one conducted in the Tyāgarājasvāmy temple at Tiruvārūr is called ōmbali. In the temple at Tiruvaramkuḷam in Pudukkōṭṭa, the 'Ōmkārabali' takes place at noon on the day prior to the Dhvajārōhaṇam

26. Age-old custom demands that only Tamiḷian Pāraśavas are to be employed for the purpose. Of late, however, owing to the paucity of the Pāraśavas, their Malayāli counterpart, the Mārāns from the Malayāla Dēśa, are engaged. Usually, they are got down from Pāraśśālā.

At the termination of the Pūjā, to the accompaniment of a chorus of music, the flag is hoisted.[27] This is a solemn ceremony. Soon after, a parivaṭṭam or a piece of new cloth is tied around the lower base of the Dhvajastambha, and over it, blades of fresh dharbha grass, as well as mango and pipal leaves are tied As soon as this is finished, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar takes his seat to the south of the Dhvajastambha facing north and again commences pūjā. Nine pots of fresh water are placed before him and he performs what is called the Navakalaśa Pūjā. An abhiṣēkha or anointing of the Dhvajapīṭha takes place with the water sanctified by the Navakalaśa Pūjā. This is followed by the offering of Neivēdyam to the Dhvajastambha.

On the termination of the rites and ceremonies near the Dhvajastambha, the leading officials of the temple and prominent citizens proceed to the spot where the Svāmy Tēr, the principal car of the temple, stands, and perform the Kāl-nāṭṭu ceremony. This is done by erecting a wooden pillar on one of the tiers of the car, anointing it with sandal paste and saffron, and tying around it mango leaves. This ceremony is in the nature of an inauguration of the celebration of the Utsava. Similarly, a Kāl or wooden post is planted on the other three cars, and the ceremony is repeated there, too. Just as the Dhvaja now flying aloft proclaims that the Utsava has commenced, so the Kāl on the Tēr announces that the Car Festival will take place on the 9th day.

At about 4 p.m. on the Dhvajārōhaṇa day, Gaṇapati (the bronze image in Sabhāpati shrine) is seated on a Mūṣika Vāhana (representing a standing figure of the mouse carved in wood) and is taken in procession through the streets. Gaṇapati (Vighnēśvara) is not only believed to ward off all obstacles but also to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

2nd day: Both in the morning and evening, the 'Utsava images' of Śiva and Pārvati (Śucīndaperumāḷ and Umā) are taken in procession on a wooden platform (capram) canopied and decorated profusely with flowers. Hence this Vāhana is spoken of as Pūmpandal. It is believed that Śiva presents Guru Darśan or darśan as teacher in the

27. The actual hoisting is ceremoniously done by two Pōṟṟis, usually, by two members of the family of the Yōgakkār. If more than two families of Yōgakkār are represented in the temple at the time, then the privilege is exercised by the Manalikkara and Puttillam Pōṟṟis. It is noteworthy that, in the process of hoisting the flag, care is taken that the coconut tied to a corner of the cloth does not knock against any part of the Dhvajastambha. The belief is that, if it does so, it forebodes disaster for the people of the place during the ensuing year.

morning and Śiva darśan or darśan as the beneficent boon-giver in the evening.

3rd day. Again, at about 8 a.m., the images of Śiva and Pārvati are taken out on the 'Pūmpandal' Vāhana That afternoon, the images of Valampiri Vināyakar from Ēḻakaram, a suburb of adjoining Kōṭṭāṟ, of Subrahmaṇia from Kumārakōil near Thuckalay and of Subrahmania from Marungūr arrive at Śucīndram. Representing the sons of Śiva, these images participate in the Utsava of Sthāṇumūrti. In the procession of that night itself, these images find a place That night, the image of Śiva, flanked by Umā on his left, is taken out on a Vāhana decorated like a Kalpaka Vṛkṣa, a holy tree believed to be an eternal giver of gifts. The underlying idea is that the sons of Śiva approach him and are granted their requests. Hence, it is said that devotees worshipping Śiva and Pārvati that night at Śucīndram, will have their particular desires fulfilled.

4th day: In the morning, Śiva and Pārvati appear on the Bhūta Vāhana (vehicle representing Demon), and at night, on a gaily decorated wooden platform. It is believed that on the 4th morning and night, Śiva is represented as granting boons to devotees.[28]

5th day: With the 5th day, the Utsava assumes a more important and spectacular aspect, and large crowds of visitors pour in Early in the morning, about 5 a.m., Uṣa Pūjā is offered to the deities seated on the Vāhanas. The grand procession starts immediately after the Pūjā. It is held that the Uṣa Pūjā celebrates Śiva's grant of darśan to Nanda, the paṟiah devotee.[29]

On the 5th morning and night, Śiva, flanked by Umā, is seated on the splendidly carved Nandi Vāhana of silver.[30] Aṟamvaḷattamman, represented by the image of Umayammai (in the shrine of Śucīndaperumāḷ), is seated on the Anna (Swan) Vāhana of silver. Viṣṇu appears on the silver Garuḍa Vāhana.[31] On the 5th night, a much larger crowd of visitors is seen than in the earlier days. Highly paid

28. The expenses of the 4th Utsava, both of the morning and night are met by the authorities of Tiruvāḍuturai Maṭha.

29. The idea is that the brahmins might see Nanda after day-break, and hence the Uṣa pūjā.

30. Ṛṣabha Vāhana is appropriate to this occasion, for Ṛṣabha personifies Dharma, and Śiva appears as Dharmakartā or the Lord of Righteousness.

31. This is the first time that Viṣṇu figures in connection with the processions of the Utsava. Visnu is represented by the Utsava image kept in the Tekkēdam shrine.

pipers and drummers appear. Gymnastic shows, magical display and fireworks are among the entertainments provided for the occasion.

6th day: The sixth Utsava does not present any grand procession, and few outsiders come to witness it. But certain Purāṇic themes are staged this day. The images of the four Śaiva Nāyanmār appear for the first time in procession.

Tirumulaippāl: In the morning, the images of Śiva and Pārvati as well as of the four saints are first taken out. When the procession comes out of the temple to the Nātakaśāla, the Purāṇic story of 'Tirumulaippāl' is staged. Pārvati is shown feeding the boy Tirujñāṇa Sambanda on her breast milk.[32]

When the procession moves and reaches Pērambalam in the South Street, yet another Purāṇic event is delienated. This is the thrashing of Śiva, when he went to the help of Sundaramūrti. Dēvadāsis used to conduct the mock ceremony of beating Śiva with sheaths of the plantain tree.[33]

An equally interesting ceremony appears on the night of the 6th Utsava. This represents the contest believed to have been held between the Śaivite and the Jaina devotees. It is really a commemoration of the contest between the Advaitins represented by Tirujñāṇa Sambanda and the Jains. The tradition is that, at the contest, the two parties were to divine by intuition the particular article kept sealed within a pitcher. The religion of the party that gave the correct answer was to be declared superior, while the members of the vanquished party were to be impaled on stakes. Here, the failure of the Jains and the consequent punishment that befalls them are depicted. The Vairāvi Ānavāḷ of the pagoda play

32. The incident in the life of Sambanda celebrated on the occasion, is said to have taken place while he was a young boy. He had accompanied his father to the tank for a bathe. While his father was bathing, the boy felt lonely and began to weep. Then Pārvati herself appeared and suckled the boy with her breast milk. It is believed that the boy really had drunk the 'milk of knowledge' In some of the temples of South India, the 'Tirumulaippāl' ceremony is celebrated on the third day of the Utsava. In the Kapālīśvara temple of Mylapore, until 1924 A.D., the celebration figured on the 3rd day. Now this item is totally dropped

33 The legend runs that Ālāla Sundara, while in Kailāsa, cast an amorous glance on a 'Dēvastri' (celestial woman) and hence was cursed to be born on earth. Born as Sundaramūrti, he leads a licentious life. Yet, devotee of Śiva as he is, he deputes the god himself as a messenger to the house of a harlot. Śiva, on being discovered, is subjected to thrashing by the harlots. Until 1930 A.D. this beating was done by Dēvadāsis. Now men servants of the temple play the role.

the role of the executioners After the supposed execution, the Vairāvis are expected to show the authorities the blood-stained trident fixed to the stakes.[34]

After the sixth Utsava night, the triumphant saint Sambandar is offered during the procession the same honours, like the pūjā and Maṇḍapappaḍi,[35] as the minor deities. However, it is only beyond Pērambalam in the South Street, that his image is included among those taken in procession.

Vaikuṇṭha Ēkādaśi · On the 6th day of the Mārkaḻi Utsava falls the Vaikuṇṭha Ēkādaśi. Particularly sacred for Viṣṇu, this day witnesses special offerings for Perumāl in Tekkēdam. An important feature is that in the Madhusūdanasvāmy temple in Parakkai near Śucīndram, this Ēkādaśi is celebrated with great splendour. Most of the devotees who come to Śucīndram for the 5th Utsava make it a point to proceed to Paṛakkai and offer worship at the famous shrine there.

7th day: The seventh day witnesses the most magnificent celebration of the entire Utsava. The biggest crowd yet, appears on the 7th day festival, particularly at that night. Early in the morning, silver images of the various gods and of the four saints are taken in twelve silver palanquins in a splendid procession. The idea underlying this procession is that the saints as well as the deities are tired after the previous day's disputation, and that they are represented to be taking rest. The images are placed in the śayana or reclining pose.

In the evening, there appears the festival described as 'Cūrṇōtsava' or 'Tiruccāndu'. The principal part of the ceremony is the application of śāndu or tilaka on the forehead of the image of Naṭarāja. The genesis of this celebration is found in the Purāṇic tradition that Śiva vanquished and killed the demon (asura) Tripura and that his triumph was demonstrated in this manner. A grand abhiṣēkha and pūjā precede the actual ceremony.[36]

34 It is surprising that the impalement of the Jains is celebrated in Śucīndram on the 6th night of the Utsava In Madurai, the historical scene of its occurrence, and in several other temples, it falls on the 7th day. The Uttarakāraṇāgama itself demands it to be celebrated on the 7th. Perhaps, the desire to keep the 7th festival as a grand celebration in itself, accounts for the deviation here.

35. Maṇḍapappaḍi denotes special worship and Dīpārādhana.

36. This celebration figures prominently in the temples of the East Coast. Some temples, for example, that of Mylapore, conduct it twice during the Utsava, one on the morning of the 6th day before the bali and another on the morning of the 10th day after the bali.

The Utsava of the 7th night presents the most pompous procession. The outstanding feature is that the imposing Kailāsa Vāhana of silver appears as the vehicle of Śiva and Pārvati. The Vāhana itself depicts the famous Purāṇic legend of Śiva curbing the arrogance of Rāvaṇa.[37] The representation of this incident illustrates an allegoric truth; it emphasizes the destruction of conceit (*Āṇavamalạittal*) by the might of God. The accompaniments of the grand Utsava are there: the highly paid pipers, drummers, flutists and numerous entertainments like dancing and musical concerts, religious discourses, and devotional songs, acrobatic feats and fire-works, all on a more magnificent scale than on the 5th Utsava. The procession, starting from the temple at 9 p.m., returns so late as 3 a.m. the next morning. The various diversions, mentioned above, entertain the visitors all the time.

8th day: This day is exclusively devoted to the representation of Śiva as Naṭarāja, the Lord of Dance, the 'Tāṇḍava Mūrti'. It is held that, because the previous night arrogance had been crushed, Śiva evinces his exultation through his dance. Early in the morning, at about 5-30 a.m., the procession of Naṭarāja starts. Since the procession depicts the dance, the Vāhana is carried in rapid strides, the pipers playing suitable tunes.

That night, again, Naṭarāja, seated on a Pūmpandal Vāhana, is taken through the streets in the same gay brisk manner. Devotees, gathered on all the sides of the Vāhana, repeat in chorus the words 'Tillaiyambalam: Tiruccirrambalam'.[38] Quite exhilarating this scene! A party of young singers accompanies the Vāhana singing devotional hymns.

9th day: This is the day of the Car Festival. Multitudes of people from far and near throng the streets of Śucīndram. The social aspect of the festivities is seen at its height. The tradition in Nāñcināḍ is that newly wedded couples must, during the first year of their married life, attend the Car Festival at Śucīndram.[39]

Immediately preceding the Car Festival appears the procession of Śiva in the form of Bhikṣāḍana. It is the representation of Śiva in the

37. See Infra Chapter XII, for an account of the legend

38. Naṭarāja's celebrated place of dance is believed to be the Kanakasabhai of Cidambaram, and these epithets are names of that sacred shrine.

39. By no means is the participation in 'Tērōttam' confined to the 'new couples'. Young and old, men and women, muster strong. A traditional practice has been for friends and relatives to make presents of money to children. The newly wedded couples receive a fat share

role of a beggar with the begging bowl.[40] Unlike every other procession of the Utsava, this is accompanied only by a party of singers. No kind of instrumental music forms a part. People bestow '*Kāṇikkai*' or offering of money.[41]

At about 7 a.m., when this procession returns to the temple, there commences the Car Festival. All the four cars are decorated with festoons, flags, and garlands A glittering gold-plated *Kumbha* adorns the pinnacle of each of the cars. The respective images are seated inside the various cars, and in the Svāmy Tēr, a party of pipers and drummers is given a place. In the case of the Mārkaḻi Car Festival, the image of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy, flanked by Umā on the left, is seated in the huge Svāmy Tēr. The goddess Pārvati is separately placed in the Amman Tēr, Viṣṇu in the Piḷḷayār Tēr and Indra in the Capra Tēr. Seated in the car, Indra is supposed to be witnessing the Utsava.[42]

The Government officials of the District are present in order to co-operate with the Dēvasvam authorities in the successful conduct of the festival. The cars are drawn mostly by the visitors from the various parts of Nāñcinād. In the past, it was the duty of every citizen of Nāñcināḍ to render active help in the 'Tērōṭṭam'. Since the days of Bālamārtāṇḍavarma, the leading members of the landed gentry, as well as the descendants of donors of gifts to the temple, are presented with a parivaṭṭam (new piece of cloth) and a coconut. It is considered a privilege and an honour to be one of the recipients of the present. However, the practice appears to have been instituted primarily to enlist the hearty co-operation of the rich citizens of Nāñcināḍ in the Car Festival.

The ruling sovereign of Travancore does not break his fast that morning until the Cars reach their original place. The message is swiftly conveyed to him by the sound of squibs, fired at short distances, between Śucīndram and Nagercoil, thence by telegram to the Telegraph

40. The Purāṇic version is that Śiva assumed this form in order to get rid of the sin of having killed Brahmā. There is also a tradition that this role was adopted by Śiva to test the fidelity of the proud wives of the sages in Dārukavana. See Infra Chapter XII.

41. In December 1942, the benefactions amounted only to Rs. 2/10/-. It is said that, in the past, a respectable sum was received. In the case of many temples, the Bhikṣādana festival (described also as Kaṅkālanātha Utsava) is celebrated either on the 5th or the 7th day.

42. In Cittirai, the Svāmy Tēr is not used. Sthāṇunātha and Umā are taken in procession in the Amman Tēr; Amman alone is taken in the Capra Tēr and Vināyaka in the Piḷḷayār Tēr. In Āvani, Visnu alone is taken out in the Piḷḷayar Tēr.

Office at Trivandrum, and finally by the firing of squibs between that office and the royal palace. Prior to the introduction of telegrams, the information was communicated from Śucīndram direct to Trivandrum by means of the firing of squibs only.

Usually after the procession through the Main Streets, the Cars are brought back to their original position by about 11 a m. But, at times, the axils of the wheels break or some nut or nail gives way. This is natural, because, during the major part of the year the Cars are kept stationary. Promptly, the repairs are attended to, and every effort is made to bring the festival to a speedy and successful finish.

Saptāvarna : The night of the 9th day witnesses the celebration of the Saptāvarṇa, which is really a parting ceremony.[43] The vāhanas and images are just the same as those used on the 5th day. Śiva and Pārvati are on Ṛsabha Vāhana, Aramvaḷattamman on the Swan, Viṣṇu on Garuda, Ganapati on Mūṣika and Subrahmaṇia on the Peacock.

On the termination of the procession, all the Vāhanas assemble near the Anuppu Maṇdapa facing the eastern entrance to the pagoda. Then follows the parting scene. The sons of Śiva, who had been brought from different places, are believed now to take leave of their parents. The parting scene adds pathos to the grandeur of the show, and a thrill of emotion among the devotees is noticeable. The principal Vāhana bearing Śiva and Umā is taken to the entrance, and then, as if to evince the reluctance of the deities, it is brought back close to the Vāhanas of their sons. Twice this is done, and finally, the Vāhana is taken straight into the temple.

10th day : On the 10th and the last day, which falls on the Tiruvātirai Star, appears the Āṛāt, otherwise known as the Ārudra Festival. Legendary lore connects this celebration with the penance of the three goddesses on the banks of the Prajñātīrtha. Before the Āṛāṭ, at about 8 a.m., there occurs the ceremony of 'Dēvatāhuvānam' accompanied by the 'Bhērītādanam'.[44] The idea underlying this ceremony

43. 'Saptāvarna' literally means seven rounds. This festival is so called because the procession of the deities goes round the 7th Prākāra (mārga) only. This is really the Ratha Vīti (the inner prākāras of the temple, and the streets immediately around it, together form 6 rounds) Thus the Saptāvarna procession goes only through those streets along which the cars had been drawn earlier in the day

44. 'Dēvatāhuvānam' denotes the invocation of the Dēvas by means of prayer. 'Bhērītādanam' means the beating of a drum. This is an art which demands skill and experience. The manner of beating the drum for the invocation of different gods varies.

is that all the gods are invited to be present and bless the termination of the Utsava. The Tantri chants mantras and invocations to the various deities, accompanied by the offering of havis. As each god is being invoked, the Pāraśava beats his drum (Pāṇi) in the manner prescribed for that deity.

When this is over, the preparation for the Āṛāṭ commences. Just on the eve of the Āṛāt, a preliminary ceremony figures. This is the powdering of gold dust along with turmeric to be smeared over the images. This powdering is done in a ceremonious manner by the Ōtuvār (chorist) and the Dēvadāsi (of the 1st Kudi) together. The mortar is placed in the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa, and the pestle is held both by the Ōtuvār and the Dēvadāsi during the pounding process. Further, both the persons sing a particular hymn from Māṇikkavācaga's Tiruvācagam.

At about 10 a.m., the Āṛāt procession starts from the temple. The Utsava images of the various deities are taken in a procession to the adjoining Teppakkuḷam, and the holy bathe takes place. There, at the bathing ghat, a Neivēdyam and Pūjā are offered. The nine varieties of corn, made to germinate since the night of the Dhvajārōhaṇa, are now taken out, and the germinated seeds are offered, along with the cooked rice, as oblation. With the return of the procession to the temple, the Āṛāṭ Festival terminates.[45]

The Mauna Bali: The very last ceremony connected with the Utsava is the formal lowering of the flag. Immediately preceding it, is the elaborate celebration of the Mauna Bali. This commences soon after the Attāḷa Śrībali in the case of the Mārkaḷi Utsava and after the floating festival in the case of the Cittirai Utsava.[46] The Mauna Bali is quite a unique ceremony. No image is carried. No musical party accompanies the procession. In fact, the group consists only of four men. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi is the leader, to assist whom there are two Turakkār, carrying flowers, havis, etc., needed for offering bali. The other member is the Pāraśava, who does not play upon the pāṇi as usual,

45. In Cittirai, the 'Teppōtsava' or floating festival takes the place of the Āṛāṭ. The 'Floating Festival', conducted on the 10th night lasts from about 10 p.m. to about 2 the next morning The images of Śiva and Pārvati are placed in a gaily decorated wooden frame and a procession of 3 rounds takes place within the tank Finally, a Dīpārādhana is conducted for the deities at the Maṇḍapa in the centre of the tank. In the case of the Āvani Utsava it is only the Ārāt that is celebrated. The Ārāṭ in Āvani is doubtless a grand ceremony

46. No Mauna bali is conducted in connection with the Āvani Utsava.

but only beats in a subdued tone the cēṇḍai (another kind of drum), and that, at long intervals. Indeed the strokes on the drum fall in such a deliberate and measured manner as to produce an atmosphere of solemnity and serenity. Not a syllable is uttered by any member of the group during the entire course of the Mauna Bali. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, the master of the ceremony, offers bali as the party moves on He is expected to have fasted the whole day. It is further enjoined that no unholy thought should cross his mind during the entire period.

By the time the Mauna Bali commences, no other person, not even any Śāntikkār, is allowed to remain within the precincts of the temple. The Mauna Bali party goes around the Śrībalipura twice, and then once by the Main Streets. At the termination of the third round, the party proceeds by the side of the tank to the Munnūṟṟunaṅkai Amman (Kāḷi) temple. By that time, the Pāraśava arcaka and the Śrīkāryakkāran are to be ready at the entrance. Prior to this, the arcaka must have performed the abhiṣēkha, the decoration of the image of the goddess and also the Vīra Bali.[47]

The Mauna Bali party enters the Kāḷi temple. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi himself performs a pūjā to the goddess, and then offers bali in the bali pīṭha in front of the shrine. Thereafter, he comes out to the tank, washes his feat, returns to the temple, worships the goddess and offers kānikkai, a payment of money, which, however, is only a nominal amount. Now, the party gets out of the Kāḷi temple and proceeds to the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy pagoda The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi prostrates in front of the Dhvajastambha, and getting up, performs the ceremony of lowering the flag, chanting mantras all the while. By the time the Mauna Bali is completed and the flag is lowered, it is nearly 4 a.m. There is a strict injunction that the Mauna Bali must be finished before daybreak.[48]

47. The Vīra Bali in the Kāḷi temple was formerly conducted by offering a sacrifice of goats. Since the abolition of animal sacrifice in the State in 1930 A.D., cucumber takes the place of goats.

48. The details regarding the Mauna Bali have been gathered from Sri P. Paramesvara Sarma, the present Vattappalli Sthānikar. He has mentioned about a violation of the traditional usage that occurred in Mārkali 1084 (1908 A.D.). The arcaka of the Kāli temple, nursing a grievance against the authorities, had kept the doors closed and disappeared The Mauna Bali was consequently held up until the next night.

It is known that vast sums of money are spent on each Utsava According to the revised scale of expenditure fixed in 1935 A.D., the amounts allotted are Rs. 12,000 for the Mārkaḷi Utsava, Rs. 10,000 for the Cittirai Utsava and Rs. 2,500 for the Āvani Utsava.

History of the Utsavas The earliest epigraphic reference to the Utsava in Śucīndram occurs only in the inscription of Vīra Rāma Rāma Varma of 646 M.E. (1471 A.D.)[19] The king registers some endowments for the celebration of the 4th day of the Mārkaḷi festival. No indication is found that this king established the Utsava for the first time, it is likely to have arisen earlier.

Circumstantial evidence throws some light on the matter. Kaliṅgattupparaṇi[50] states that Rāja Rāja the Great, established the Cadayam Festival in the Cēra country. It is significant that the Mārkaḷi Utsava in Śucīndram commences on Cadaya Nakṣatra. It is probable that Rāja Rāja himself instituted the Utsava in Sucīndram.

A noteworthy feature is that by about the 10th century A.D. Utsava had appeared in the great temples of Tamiḻ Nād, and of Malai Nāḍ. An inscription of Bhāskara Ravi Varman (992-1016 A.D.) reveals that the Utsava was established in the temple of Tirukkadittānam[51] by that ruler. On the whole, there is a great likelihood that about the 10th century A.D. the Utsava appeared in Śucīndram as well.

Perhaps, only the Mārkaḻi Utsava was celebrated for some centuries. By the 17th century the Cittirai Utsava, too, was begun. The inscription of 781 M.E. (1606 A.D.) shows clearly that two Utsavas, one at Mārkaḻi and the other at Cittirai were celebrated in or earlier than that date.[52]

The Āvaṇi Utsava is undoubtedly a much later introduction. The Accounts of 949 M.E. (1774 A.D.) mention this festival for the first time; and in all likelihood, it was instituted in the 18th century A.D.

Other Annual Festivals: Besides the Mahōtsavas, certain other festivals, too, are celebrated every year. Conducted on a modest scale, these minor festivals are much less expensive than the Mahōtsavas.

1. '*Kalabham*': Among these celebrations, the most prominent one is the Kaḷabham, which lasts thirteen days. It is a festival dedi-

49 T. A. S, IV, pp 92 ff
50 Verse, No 188, p 29.
51 T A S, V, p 187.
52 Idem VIII, p. 24

cated to the ceremonious anointing of the Śrībali images of Vaḍakkēḍam with sandal paste. 'Kaḷabham' literally means sandal paste, mixed with other fragrant ingredients, like rose water, *kuṅkumappu*, *paccakkarpūram*, *gōrōcana* and *aṣṭagandham*. Kalabham, weighing nearly 8½ lbs. is prepared and filled in a huge pot of gold. After performing pūjās and chanting mantras to this 'Kalabhabrahmakalaśa', as the vessel is called, the whole of the sandal paste is slowly poured on the Śrībali images of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam. During the performance of this Abhiṣēkha on all the thirteen days, special 'Pañcavādyam', viz., musical accompaniment, is on attendance. Besides, the chanting of Vēdic Mantras is performed by 42 brahmins. After the completion of this Abhiṣēkha, there commences the 'Hōma' viz., fire worship. On the courtyard to the south of the Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar shrine a huge pit (Hōmakuṇḍa) is dug and a splendid hōma or sacrificial fire is raised in it. On all the thirteen days, about 11 a.m., ghee, honey, parched rice, etc., are offered at the Hōmakuṇḍa, accompanied by the chanting of mantras. Every day, at the termination of the Hōmapūjā, a Śrībhūtabali, which is really Śrībali of an elaborate pattern, takes place. It is needless to add that on the thirteenth or the last day, all the rites and ceremonies are performed on a much larger scale than on the previous days. The master of the entire festival is the Tantri, the Taruṇanallūr Nambūdiripāḍ himself.

It must be observed that the Kaḷabham festival is also sacred to Vināyaka. In fact, the festival is alternatively known as 'Gaṇapati Hōmam'. It is held to be a propitiation of Gaṇapati, invoking him to bless the land with adequate rainfall and continuous prosperity. The Kaḷabham appears to have been introduced into Śucīndram rather recently. Evidence of the earliest Kalabham celebration dates only to 17th Kārtikai 976 M.E. (1800 A.D.). The expenses connected with the ceremony were originally met from the king's privy purse. At present, they are included in the regular items of Dēvasvam expenditure. But, even now, the Kaḷabham is celebrated sometime before the second monthly natal star of the ruling sovereign. During the reign of the present ruler, whose annual birthday falls in Alpaśi, Kalabham is held before his monthly birthday in Kārtikai.

2. *Tirukkalyāṇam.* Every year, on the Makaṁ Nakṣatra of Māśi (February-March), the celebration of the holy marriage of Sthāṇumūrti with Aṛamvaḷattamman takes place. It is conducted in commemoration of the alleged union of Aramvalattamman with the deity. In con-

nection with this festival, members belonging to the family of Aṛam-vaḷattamman, acting as the bridal party, bring to the temple new clothes, turmeric, saffron and other equipments. The festival really lasts for nine days, starting with Bharaṇi in the month of Māśi and ending with Pūram. On all the nine days, at night, about 11 p.m., a fixed quantity (11 kaṭṭis) of cooked rice, mixed with salt, pepper and oil, is distributed among the poor. On the 8th day, viz., the day of the marriage, a procession of the goddess goes as far as the Kāśi Viśvanātha shrine at Paṛakkai. After the celebration of the marriage, at night, a procession of the Svāmi and Amman is taken through the streets of Śucīndram. On the following day, a Car Festival, on a small scale, is conducted with the images seated in the Piḷḷayār Tēr.

3. *Śrī Jayanti*: A three days' festival, connected with the Tekkēḍam shrine of Viṣṇu, is Śrī Jayanti, known also as 'Gōkulāṣṭami', 'Janmāṣṭami' and 'Kṛṣṇa Jayanti'. The festival celebrates the birth and boyish pranks of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It starts on Rōhiṇi Nakṣatra when it is Aṣṭami in the month of Āvaṇi. That is the birthday of Kṛṣṇa which falls on the 8th day of the dark fortnight in Āvaṇi (August-September). On the two succeeding days, too, the festival continues. There are special pūjās, offerings and chanting of mantras and sacred hymns, followed by processions. On the third day is held the 'Uṛiyaḍi' festival which symbolizes the stealing of butter by Kṛṣṇa.[53] Two poles are erected about the middle of the East Street and, to the centre of a connecting horizontal pole, a pulley is attached. Through the pulley runs a rope bearing at one end a small pot of coloured water. It is now an enjoyable sportive entertainment; some one of the nimble persons tries to knock down the pot of water, which is raised and lowered in order to avoid the reach of the person. The religious significance underlying the festival is, in a large measure, dominated by the frolic and fun caused by the Uṛiyaḍi.

4. *Kārtikai Dīpam*: This is held on the full-moon day in the month of Kārtikai (October-November). In the morning, after special abhiṣēkhas and pūjās, the image of Sthāṇumūrti is taken in procession around the streets. At night, there occurs the gay celebration known as "Cokkappanai-dīpāghōṣa". A tall stem of a palmyra is planted on the ground in front of the temple, and a thick cluster of palmyra leaves and dried twigs are fastened around the stem. The entire structure is

53 'Uṛi' is a contrivance by which pots containing liquid may be suspended from the roof so as to be beyond the reach of ants, cats, etc.

then set fire to. The huge conflagration provides an enjoyable sight. It may be observed that in several famous temples this celebration appears; near Śūcīndram it figures at Maruttuvāmalai and Kanyākumari.[54]

The legendary genesis of the festival is interesting. Tradition has it that several sages and pious devotees, when harassed by asuras (demons), implored the protection of Śiva. In response to their request, Śiva burnt down the aerial cars of those asuras by the fire emitted from his third eye. The Cokkappanai symbolizes the aerial cars of the asuras. However, the celebration of the 'Kārtikai Dīpam' is virtually a propitiation of Agni (Fire). Temples, as well as the houses of Hindus, are profusely illuminated throughout the month of Kārtikai and particularly on Tirukkārtikai night.

5. *Tai Pūśam :* Another single-day festival celebrated in the temple is that of Tai Pūśam. It is observed on the Pusya Naksatra in the month of Tai (January-February). The presiding deity of the Pusya asterism is the planet of Bṛhaspati, Guru. Worship offered to Puṣya is believed to bring special merit since Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of the gods and the most important of the seven planets, is believed to personify wisdom. A bathe in the holy river or tank and worship at the temple is highly commended. A legendary association attached to Tai Pūśam is that Pārvati bestowed on her son Subrahmaṇia the celebrated 'Vēlāyudha' or the lance on a Tai Pūśam. At Śucīndram, the festival bears a special significance, because it is held that Indra secured redemption from his sin on Tai Pūśam. Every Tai Pūśam witnesses in Śucīndram the Ārāṭ (sacred bathe) of the images at Teppakkulam and special pūjās, offerings and processions.

6. *Mahā Śivarātri :* This is a famous festival celebrated in honour of Śiva on the night of the 14th date of the dark half in the month of Māśi (February-March). Throughout the Śivarātri night, orthodox Hindus keep awake and offer worship to Śiva. At each one of the four quarters (yāma or gana) devotees worship the deity. Special dīpārādhanas and pūjās are offered in the temple at each of the ganas. The Pūrāṇic basis for this celebration is that when the entire universe was under a deluge, Pārvati prayed to Śiva for redemption and requested that those who had escaped destruction should be allotted a specific time for offering prayers to him. This was fixed on this particular night

54. The most celebrated 'Dīpam' festival occurs in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai.

of Māśi. In order to help the common folk to keep awake at night, at least as a formal observance, religious dramas, and entertainments are conducted. In the temple at Śucīndram, the drama 'Sāranga-dhara' used to be staged by the Dēvadāsis at the 'Nāṭakaśāla'. Now the public of Śucīndram organize and conduct any religious drama.

Cittirai Visu Cittirai Visu, the 1st day of the month of Cittirai, marks the commencement of the Tamil New Year. It is interesting to observe that Viṣu is celebrated with great zest by the Malayāḷis also. Visu has other sacred associations, too, with Hindus It is believed that Visu was the day chosen by Brahmā to commence his creation of the Universe. Besides, it is held that, after the destruction of the Rāksasas, Rāma had his triumphal entry into Ayōdhya on Cittirai Visu.

The Malayālis, who celebrate Viṣu with great eclat, hold that they should set their eyes on auspicious articles early in the morning on rising from bed, so that all the year round, they may have good luck. It is well known that, after the establishment of the Kollam Era, the month of Ciṅgam (Āvaṇi) or Kanni (Puraṭṭāśi) sees the commencement of the New Year[55] for the Malayāḷis. But the old memory could not be forgotten, and perhaps, that accounts for the continuance of the celebration of Visu even now.

In the Śucīndram temple, in this matter, as in several others, the coalescence of the Tamil and Malayāli usages is seen, and Viṣu is celebrated on a grand scale. Special pūjās and oblations appear in the shrines. Early in the morning, people go to the temple and offer prayers. They are given betel leaves and arecanuts, as well as prasādams. Feasting for the Brahmins is a feature of the Viṣu Festival in the pagoda.

Māsa Viśēsam: Besides the annual festivals, certain ceremonies take place every month. Pradōṣam, Sōmavāra (Monday), Ēkādaśi, Paurṇima are the days when special features appear. But, they are by no means comparable with the annual ceremonies. Special Neivēdyam, Dīpārādhana, more elaborate decoration of the images are the only features in addition to the daily routine.

The Admixture of the West and East Coast systems in the ceremonies of the Temple: The study of the daily ceremonies and the

55. A curious circumstance about the Kollam Era is that, in Southern Kērala, Ciṅgam (Āvani) is reckoned as the 1st month, while in Northern Kērala, the new year begins in Kanni (Purattāśi).

annual festivals of the Śucīndram temple is particularly interesting, because it reveals the interaction of the Malayāḷi and Tamiḷian usages. The basic system was that of the Tamiḷ land; but, on the advent of the Malayāḷi brahmins, certain inevitable changes appeared. However, it is surprising that, in spite of the Malayāḷi Tantris, Yōgakkār and Śāntikkār, the older system has survived in the main. A consideration of the principal features of the ceremonies conducted inside the temple, as well as of those outside it, substantiates this.

Inner Ceremonies. It has been already noticed,[56] how both the Paḷḷiyuṇarṭal and Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci figure in Śucīndram. The prominence of Tirumañjanam, which is totally absent in Malayāḷi temples has already been observed. In Śucīndram, however, it is the Utsava images which are employed for Tirumañjanam.

That raises the question of the different types of images in the temple. In Śucīndram, as in most of the pagodas of Tamiḻ Nāḍ, there are three categories of images: the Mūla Vigrahas (those set up in the Mūla Sthāna), the Srībali Vigrahas (those carried in the prākāras on occasions of the Śrībali) and the Utsava images (those taken out on Vāhanās during the festivals). On the other hand, in the Malayāḷi temples, even in the most well-equipped ones, only Mūla Vigrahas and the Śrībali Vigrahas exist. During Utsavas, only the Śrībali images are taken out.

The conduct of Śrībali in Śucīndram itself presents certain unique features. In the first place, in most of the temples of Tamiḻ Nāḍ, the images are not taken out in procession through the outer prākāras in connection with the Śrībali; only bali is offered to the minor deities in the various parts of the temple.[57] Hence the Śucīndram practice conforms to that of the West Coast, where the Vigrahas are carried in procession three rounds But, there is a difference from the West Coast usages, too. In Śucīndram, bali is offered in the first as well as the second round, whereas in the West Coast temples, it stops with the first.

A distinctly Malayāḷi type of Śrībali adopted on certain occasions in Śucīndram is what is known as Śrībhūtabali. This is but a more elaborate form of the daily Śrībali. Unlike in the case of the ordinary

56 See Supra, A, I and II.

57 True, in some of the Tamiḻ Nād temples, too, the Śrībali image or the Pāduki (the sacred feet of the deity symbolizing the god) is taken out, but they are exceptions

Śrībali, the procession takes four rounds. At Śucīndram, the Śrībhūtabali is conducted twice every day in connection with the Āvaṇi Utsava, and once every day in connection with the Kalabham. Śrībhūtabali is a later introduction by the Nambūdiri Tantris, because it figures only in the Āvani Utsava and in the Kalabham, both of which are later additions.

The Āvaṇi Utsava presents several features of the distinctive Malayāli system of rites. But, it has not been possible to eschew the Tamiḷian practice rooted in the soil. Nothing illustrates this better than the conduct of the Vēṭṭai or Mṛgayōtsava as part of the Āvani Utsava. In Tamiḻ Nāḍ, the Vēṭṭai is celebrated on the 8th night of the Utsava; in the Malayāla Dēśa, it appears only on the 9th night Quite a unique feature in the Āvaṇi Utsava at Śucīndram is that the Vēṭṭai is conducted both on the 8th and 9th nights. The old and the new practices have been blended!

Nor is the practice merely a faithful combination of the usages of the two lands. There is a slight modification, too. While the Vēṭṭai takes place at the end of the fourth round of the Śrībhūtabali in Malayāḷi Dēśa, in Śucīndram, it occurs on the 5th round. This modification seems to have been introduced because of the technical consideration that, on the 4th round of the 8th festival, the Vēṭṭai is already conducted; hence, instead of repeating it on the 4th round of the 9th night, it is done in a separate, viz., the 5th round.[58]

The Śrībhūtabali, common in the Malayāḷi temples, is adopted only for the Āvaṇi Utsava; it is totally absent in the case of the Mārkaḻi and Cittirai festivals. In connection with the latter two Utsavas, only Vīthi or Teru (Street) Śrībalis take place. However, though the Śrībhūtabali figures in the Āvaṇi Utsava, yet, a feature common to the other two festivals in Śucīndram is adopted in the Āvaṇi Utsava also, for the images are taken in procession through the streets. Thus the Āvaṇi Festival, while essentially Malayāḷi in its character, has not lost trace of the fundamental traditions of the place.

Indeed, the Tamiḷian background in the organization of the entire body of festivals in Śucīndram is unmistakable. No practice illustrates this better than the conduct of the 'Ōmkārabalippaḍittaram', and the

58 In 1899 A D a deputy of the Tantri conducted the Vēṭṭai in the 4th round of the night as in Malabār Later, he was adjudged guilty and compelled to pay a fine.

'Ōmkārabali' itself. They are absolutely unknown in the Malayāḷi temples. Nor are they mere replicas of the Tamiḻ Nāḍ usage, because, while the Ōmbali figures in most of these pagodas, the distinctive role played by the Uvacca arcaka of the Kāḷi temple in connection with the 'Ōmkārabalippaḍittaram' is unique in Śucīndram. And, it is not a little significant that the Ōmkārabalippaḍittaram and the Ōmkārabali figure not only in the Mārkaḻi and Cittirai Utsavas but also in that of Āvaṇi!

The role of the Pāraśava or the Uvaccan, as the player on the pāṇi, is indicative of the abiding influence of Tamiḻ Nāḍ. In the Malayāḷi temples, the Pāraśava does not figure; his place is taken by the Mārān. That the Malayāḷi institutions and usages were introduced by the Tantris into the Śucīndram temple, wherever possible, is evident from the fact that the Mārān is associated with the Āvaṇi Utsava. The practice in both the Mārkāḻi and Cittirai festivals is that the Pāraśava plays on the pāṇi.[59] On the other hand, in the Āvaṇi Utsava, both the Pāraśava and the Mārān are associated, the latter being brought from the Malayāḷa Dēśa. It is another instance of the blending of the usages of the Tamiḻ and Malayāḷi lands. During the Āvaṇi Utsava, in connection with the Tantris' pūjā prior to both the Dhvajārōhaṇam and the Āṛāṭ Festival, the Pāraśava and the Mārān are to be present with their pāṇis in front of the Dhvajastambha. The first to play on the Pāṇi, however, is the Pāraśava, and then comes the turn of the Mārān.

Some of the ceremonies connected with the Dhvajārōhaṇam also show the same tendency of the Tamiḻian system holding sway, resisting as it were, intrusion from outside. The Navakalaśa Pūjā occurs in Śucīndram after the Dhvajārōhaṇam. This is definitely enjoined by the Āgamas and adopted by the Tamiḻ Nāḍ temples; but it does not figure in all the pagodas of Malayāḷa Dēśa. Even where it is adopted, it appears before and not after the Dhvajārōhanam. Further, in Śucīndram, as well as in the rest of the Tamiḻ Nāḍ, the Navakalaśa pūjā is offered to the principal deity of the temple, while in such of the Malayāḷi pagodas where it is adopted, as in Trivandrum and Tiruvaṭṭār, it is performed for the 'Asṭadikpālās' and the principal deity together This feature has not found its way into Śucīndram, not even in connection with the Āvani Utsava.

59. True, some Mārāns are now engaged in connection with the Dhvajārōhanam But, that is only due to paucity of Pāraśavas; it is merely a temporary arrangement.

Yet another practice adopted in many temples of Tamil Nāḍ, and persisting in Śucīndram, but not found in the Malayāḷi pagodas is that, at the lower edge of the flag, a coconut is attached. It is done in connection with all the Utsavas at Śucīndram.

Among other celebrations common to Śucīndram and the Tamil Nāḍ temples, but unknown in Malayāḷā Dēśa, may be mentioned the 'Cūrṇōtsava' and 'Bhikṣādanamūrti' Festival and the ceremony of powdering gold dust by the Ōtuvār and the Dēvadāsi prior to the Āṛāt. It is noteworthy that the last-mentioned item does not figure in the Āvani Utsava.

Finally, the great prominence given to the Śaiva Saints Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Māṇikkavācagar in the Mārkaḻi and Cittirai Utsavas bring to the fore the Tamiḻian background of their organization Indeed, as observed already, the Utsava commences with a worship of Māṇikkavācagar. Immediately after the Āṛāṭ also, a pūjā is offered to him. Thus, the two Utsavas may be said to begin and end with a homage to Māṇikkavācagar. The prominence given to the ceremonies of 'Tirumulaippāl', 'Maṭṭayaḍi' and the execution of the Jain disputants, all bear the imprint of the distinctive Tamiḻian features, conspicuous by their absence in the Utsavas of the Malayāḷi temples

External Ceremonies : In the celebration of the Utsavas, and particularly in the conduct of the processions of the images, again, there are marked divergences from the practices in the West Coast temples. In the first place, in Śucīndram, as in the rest of Tamil Nāḍ, the Vāhanas are carried by non-brahmins. In the case of the pagodas of Malayāḷa Dēśa, as in Tiruvaṭṭār, Trivandrum and Āṛanmuḷa, the bearers of the Vāhanas must be none other than brahmins. While in Śucīndram, non-brahmins are employed for this purpose in connection with all the Utsavas, Āvani Utsava included, there is one celebration for which it is specifically enjoined that brahmins alone should carry the Vāhana. That is for the procession connected with Śrī Jayanti. And, it should be noted that the procession in this case also, goes through the streets. It is evident that the Śrī Jayanti celebration, in the present form, has been introduced by the Malayāli Tantri.[60]

Yet another influence of the Malayāḷi usage among the external ceremonies is that in the Āvaṇi Utsava, unlike in the other two at Śucīndram, the flag, though prepared on the pattern common in the

60 The records of 862 M.E. (1687 A.D.) mention the Śrī Jayanti celebration, however,they do not state that the Vāhanās are to be carried by brahmins only. It is difficult to ascertain when this innovation was introduced

Tamil Nāḍ Vaiṣṇava temples, is not carried in procession through the streets before the Dhvajārōhaṇam. Since this practice is not in vogue in the Malayāḷi temples, the explanation is obvious.

Moreover, in connection with the Āvaṇi Utsava, for the Vēṭṭai on the 9th night, as also for the Āṛāṭ on the 10th day, only the Śrībali Vigraha is taken in procession through the streets, though on all the other days of the Festival, the Utsava images are employed. How can this deviation be explained except by tracing the former practice to Malayāla Dēśa, where there are no Utsava images, as different from the Śrībali Vigrahas ?

The Tērōṭṭam (Car Festival) and Teppa Utsava (Floating Festival) are conducted in Śucīndram with great eclat, as in the rest of Tamil Nāḍ; these festivals are conspicuous by their absence in the Malayāḷi temples. The Car Festival in Śucīndram figures in the case of all the three Mahōtsavas, although there is a difference in the specific cars employed in each Utsava.

But in the case of the Āṛāṭ Festival of Āvaṇi Utsava the influence of the Malayāḷi tradition is unmistakably seen. In the pagodas of Malayāḷa Dēśa, the Āṛāṭ is the most magnificently conducted item of the entire Utsava. In Mārkaḻi and Cittirai Utsavas of Śucīndram, as in the rest of Tamil Nāḍ, though the Āṛāṭ figures as one of the celebrations, it is by no means a prominent item. But it is different with the Āvaṇi Utsava. In the latter, the Āṛāṭ is elaborately conducted; indeed, it forms the most resplendent ceremony of the Āvani Utsava.

Thus, the rites and ceremonies—internal and external— of the Śucīndram temple present quite a strange medley of practices found on the two sides of the Ghats. The basic structure is undoubtedly Tamiḻian; the super-imposition in a few details is Malayāli.

The question naturally arises how the Tamiḻian foundation has been practically left intact, in spite of the domination of the Malayāḷi Tantri, Yōgakkār, Śāntikkār etc. This is particularly surprising, because, in some of the pagodas in South Travancore, the change-over to the Malayāḷi pattern of conducting the ceremonies after the advent of the Nambūdiri priests, has been most marked.[61]

61. For example, in the Kṛṣnasvāmy temple about 3 miles north-west of Śucīndram, in 1919 A.D. Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl disbanded the Aiyaṅgār Tantri and Śāntikkār functioning for ages, and substituted in their place a Nambūdiri Tantri (Tāḻaman Pōṟṟi) and a Nambūdiri Śāntikkār The result has been, that, within

It is one of the marvels of the history of the Śucīndram pagoda that a revolutionary change was never adopted. The explanation for that is to be found in the stipulation, which, every Tantri and Śāntikkār has to make before taking up his office. Each of them has to undertake a pledge (Avarōdham) that the age-old traditions and usages would not be interfered with, but would be maintained intact. It is not known when exactly the insistence upon this stipulation commenced. But it is reasonable to suggest, that it must have appeared as early as the 13th century A.D., when the Malayāli hold on the temple started. Perhaps, when, in the days of Vīra Kērala and Kōda Kērala, the new element was introduced, this assurance was given to allay all misgivings.

two decades, all the rituals and ceremonies have been completely 'Malabārized' However, Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl ordered the retention of the Terōttam and Teppa Utsava in order to satisfy the citizens of the place, which is essentially Tamilian in tradition and outlook

C H A P T E R IX

THE TEMPLE AND SOCIETY

S*ources of information :* Information about the social life of the people connected with the Śucīndram temple is copious. Several inscriptions throw light on the social institutions and customs of the past. More comprehensive in character and vivid in details are the palm-leaf documents of the temple. Besides, the records in the archives of the Agastīśvaram Taluk contain interesting details of a relatively modern period. Popular traditions, too, are of help in elucidating some age-old institutions and practices. Moreover, the usages which continue to be in vogue at the present day are of considerable value in explaining certain aspects of the social history of the past. Finally, the known facts about similar institutions in the rest of South India provide valuable clues regarding the probable lines of development here.

But the limitations of these sources of information must not be ignored. Inscriptions do not take us very far back; certainly, not earlier than the 9th century A.D. Further, they are not primarily intended to furnish a connected account of the past, and hence, are unfortunately silent on many social institutions, customs, and developments which, to the student of history are of paramount interest. No less disconcerting is the feature that the epigraphs, sometimes separated from each other by long intervals of time, fail to provide us with a continuous picture. The palm-leaf records, which present the Accounts of the income and expenditure of the temple, no doubt, enlighten us on some aspects of the peoples' life. But, they are most copious only for

the periods commencing with the last quarter of the 17th century A.D. Even concerning the later years, the Accounts, while throwing a flood of light on the religious and economic conditions, are unfortunately silent on other phases of the social life.

Above all, in weaving together the stray facts available about the life of the people at various epochs, one word of caution is necessary. Information gathered from diverse sources, separated widely in time, should not be presented in the mass so as to furnish a general account of the social life, without express qualifications. Otherwise, it is likely to result in an unhistoric and inaccurate picture; further, it may present an unreal appearance of flat uniformity and absence of change. In order to avoid such pitfalls, it is necessary to limit our observations to the time indicated by the specific sources of information, except in such cases where there is definite evidence of the continuance of an institution or practice once established.

SECTION 1: THE EARLY SETTLERS

The Śucīndram Brahmadēya: The indubitable starting point is the fact, noticed already, that Śucīndram was a brahmadēya in the 14th year of Cōḷan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya. A brahmadēya is, as learnt from numberless South Indian inscriptions, the gift of a village together with its lands, settled by the ruling power on one or more brahmins. Invariably, the object of the endowment was to enable the donees to lead a religious life performing the rites and ceremonies of the village temple. The rights of cultivation, as well as of supervision and control of the lands within the boundaries of the brahmadēya, were bestowed on the brahmin beneficiaries by the gift-deed itself. This is inferred from a typical grant of a brahmadēya, recorded in the Madras Museum Plates.[1] Probably when the gift was made, the donor renounced every right over the village, including that of taxation. The statement '*Sarvaparihāramāha nīrōḍaṭṭikkuḍukkappaṭṭadu*' occurring in the Madras Museum Grant, as well as in several other inscriptions,[2] indicates the transfer of the entire right.

It has been noticed earlier that the earliest reference to Śucīndram as a brahmadēya occurs in the 14th year of the reign of Vīra Pāṇḍya. Does it mean that a fresh batch of brahmins was settled by that ruler at the village and that the grant of the brahmadēya was conferred on

1. I. A., Vol. XXII, p. 74.
2. See A. R. E. 78 of 1929 and 277 of 1913.

them ? Not necessarily. It is perfectly certain that in the earlier period, for instance, during the reigns of Māṟan Caḍayan and Caḍayan Māṟan, there flourished a body of brahmins connected with the temple, as is learnt from the references to the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai.[3] Indeed, the probability is that an Early Pāṇḍyan king, anterior to Vīra Pāṇḍya, perhaps, Śrī Māṟa Śrīvallabha or Vīra Nārāyaṇa Caḍayan had already settled some brahmins at the place. What Vīra Pāṇḍya may be credited with, is the endowment of the village as a gift to the brahmins.

True, the earliest mention of Śucīndram as a Caturvēdimangalam[4] occurs only in the inscription of Sundara Cōḷa Pāṇḍya. Nor does that fact necessarily suggest the advent of a new group of brahmins. In fact, 'brahmadēya' is identical with caturvēdimangalam;[5] it seems to be only a distinction without a difference. The Cōḷa Emperors, as also the Cōḷa Pāṇḍya Viceroys, had a great fascination for grandiloquent surnames and titles, and probably, that accounts for the new designation of the brahmadēya. Thus the caturvēdimangalam of Sundara Cōḷa Pāṇḍya's day appears to have been much the same as Vīra Pāṇḍya's brahmadēya.

Early inhabitants: The fact that Śucīndram was a brahmadēya or brahmin village does by no means imply that there was no member of any other caste resident in the place during the early period. Along with the brahmins, though in different localities, there must have been settled members of some other castes, too, forming adjuncts to the corporate life of the village. As evidence of this fact, besides numerous inscriptions in the rest of India, two epigraphs engraved on a rock in the temple at Agastīśvaram, hardly three miles to the south of Śucīndram,[6] may be specially mentioned. These inscriptions, recording the grant of Agastīśvaram as a brahmadēya called 'Udayamārtāṇḍa-caturvēdimangalam' in 614 M.E. (1439 A.D.), state that besides brahmins, several others were settled there to perform different kinds of

3. T. A. S., IV, pp. 119-23.

4. Caturvēdimangalam is a village of brahmins versed in the four Vēdās. It is fantastic to state, as has been done, that a caturvēdimangalam consisted of Brahmins representing each of the four Vēdās. Apparently a *caturvēdi* denoted simply a brahmin; it is the Samskrit counterpart of the Tamil word 'nāṉmaraiyōṉ' meaning a brahmin.

5. The suggestion of K. V. Subramania Ayyar (Sketches, p. 315) that a caturvēdimangalam constituted a number of villages is by no means true of all cases.

6. T A. S., VIII, pp. 3 to 7 and 'Kerala Society Papers', pp. 263-66.

work, like *śalliya virutti, kulāla virutti, and kāru virutti.*[7] It is also significant that, in the outskirts of the village, some others were set up, evidently as accessories to the village life. This is clear from the mention of *'Purakkuḍiyāka irukkum pērukku kuḍiyiruppukkum kūḍa viṭṭa nattattukkum'*, occurring in the inscription. True, the Agastīśvaram inscription belongs to a period, nearly five centuries subsequent to the grant of Śucīndram as a brahmadēya. Even so, it may not be far wrong to hold that more or less similar features must have existed here, from the start. It must be remembered that, regarding such age-old institutions and endowments, the earlier practices continued practically unaltered.

Additional proof confirming the fact that, even from early times, several others, besides the brahmin donees, were resident in Śucīndram, is furnished by the epigraphs of the place itself. For example, the earliest inscription of Māṛan Caḍayan speaks of smiths and carpenters residing in the environs of the village.[8] Belonging to the period of Cōḷan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya is another inscription[9] which speaks of the washermen of the place.

Therefore, while in the immediate vicinity of the temple there resided the brahmins of the brahmadēya, beyond, at the outer fringes of the village, must have lived people of several other castes, as adjuncts to its rural economy. Most of the non-brahmin residents, too, had to render certain services to the temple. The stone mason, for example, is described in the epigraphs as the engraver attached to the temple.[10] Thus, from early times, the village appears to have included among its residents, people like the washermen, barbers, potters, smiths and agricultural labourers.

It is learnt from the Śucīndram inscription of 320 M.E. (1145 A.D.) that, for the husking of paddy needed for the temple, one Paḷḷiyāṇḍi was employed.[11] The epigraph adds that he rendered this service by virtue of an aṭṭippēru or contract. This shows that Paḷḷiyāṇḍi, or perhaps one of his ancestors, had entered into an agreement with the authorities

7. 'Śalliya virutti' means surgery; 'Kulāla virutti', pottery; and Kāru virutti, washing clothes.

8 "மருத குணவாய்ககாலுக்கும வடக்கு தைச்சரும் கொல்லரும குடியிருக்கின்ற கொட்டில்களும".

9. T. A. S, III, p. 72. "இவ்வூா வணாணன்"

10 See Śucīndram Inscriptions of 432. M. E.; of 659. M E.; and of 665. M. E

11. T. A. S., IV, p. 20.

of the temple for undertaking this work; obviously, the scale of remuneration also was fixed by the contract. Particularly notable is the fact that Paḷḷiyāṇḍi was to have the paddy husked with the help of his relations, *Annuvayattār*.[12] There is no means of knowing the caste to which Paḷḷiyāṇḍi belonged. Probably he was a member of the Dēvaradiyār caste, from which the Dēvadāsis of the temple were recruited. This inference appears legitimate, because the palm-leaf records, as well as the local traditions, indicate that the husking of paddy for use in the temple, had formed, from time immemorial, part of the duties of the Dēvadāsi class. And, as will be seen presently, this interesting group of temple employees was not unknown in Śucīndram even in the 12th century A.D.

Besides the brahmins and the members of the Dēvadāsi class, the present inhabitants of Śucīndram include people belonging to several other castes The records of the reign of Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarma (1729-58 A.D.) show the different classes of residents of Śucīndram during that period.[13] There were, and there still continue, a few families of Nambiyārs, of Śaiva or Pāṇḍi Veḷḷāḷas, of Nāñcināḍ Veḷḷāḷas, of smiths, washermen, pipers, drummers, naṭṭuvans, and shepherds. It is not easy to determine when exactly each of these different sections came to Śucīndram originally. From a few known facts concerning their association with the temple, however, an approximate estimate of the date of their advent can be attempted.

The Nambiyārs · The Nambiyārs are the officiating priests in the Konṟayadināthar kōil, the earliest shrine, as well as in certain other shrines within the temple. They belong to the same class of brahmins known as Gurukkaḷ or Bhaṭṭars in the East Coast. Like the Gurukkaḷs, the Nambiyārs are described as Śaiva Brahmins, which indicates that their service as priests was confined to Śiva temples. There does not seem to be any doubt that, before the appearance of the Nambūdiris on the scene, the Nambiyārs were the arcakas of all the early shrines of the pagoda.[14] Thus, the Nambiyārs formed one of the earliest groups

12 "அன்னு வயத்தார் கூட்டம் எற்றுக் குத்தி".

13. See Plan No. 2.

14. It is noteworthy that originally the Nambiyārs were not distinct from the rest of brahmins. But, in course of time, the idea that those who perform pūjā in Śiva Temples and partake of the offerings made to Śiva occupied a lower status, was developed. The Gurukkal is also called Bhaṭṭar and the early inscriptions of South India refer to *Bhattavritti* as the performance of the śānti in the temple.

residing in Śucīndram. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to hold that the ancestors of the Nambiyārs appeared with the original settlers of the brahmadēya.

Śaiva Veḷḷāḷas : The Śaiva Veḷḷāḷas have been associated with the temple for quite a long time, as garland-makers, hymnists and chorists. Although it is impossible to state whether any member found at present in Śucīndram is descended from the earliest settlers of the group, it is very likely that some Śaiva Veḷḷāḷas formed part of the temple-establishment almost from the very beginning. Reference to garland-makers in the Śucīndram inscriptions occurs as early as the 10th century A.D.[15] True, the earliest mention of the chorist or Ōtuvār, the reciter of Tiruppadigam, is found, to the best of our knowledge, only in the palm-leaf records of the 17th century A.D.; but, by no means does it prove that they first appeared in the place so late as that. While it is very likely that the recitation of Tiruppadigam was common in Śucīndram much earlier, it is not easy to determine the caste of the people who performed this service in the initial stages. In South India, there are certain early inscriptions of Parāntakā's time which speak of appointment of brahmins in order to sing the Tiruppadigam.[16] But, it seems probable that from Rāja Rāja's time, if not earlier, the practice was commenced of entrusting this divine service to Veḷḷāḷas.[17] So far as Śucīndram is concerned, the plausible conclusion is that, for garland-making the Veḷḷāḷas were introduced very early, and that the singing of the Tiruppadigam was entrusted to them sometime before the 17th century A.D. The palm-leaf record of 1819 A.D. indicates that the Ōtuvār class was often imported from outside. The record in question is the copy of a request despatched to the authorities of the temple at Cidambaram to send five expert chorists of the Śaiva Veḷḷāḷa class, since the Ōtuvār group at Śucīndram had become extinct. It is stated that the principal chorist of the place at present is a descendant of one of those members who arrived about 1819 A.D. Now, there are only six families of the group resident in Śucīndram. Though a few members of the class had come very early, they have always remained a small minority in the place.

15. T. A. S, III, p. 69.
16. A. R. E. 373 of 1903 and 99 of 1929.
17. In Rāja Rāja's Tanjāvūr inscription, the separate mention of three persons to sing Āriyam, of four others for the Tamil songs, and of a choir of 50 persons for reciting the Tiruppadigam, suggests this

The Nāñcinād Veḷḷāḷas: The Nāñcinād Veḷḷāḷas or Nāñcinād Piḷḷamār, a class of agriculturists and land owners, do not form a large section of the population of Śucīndram, even at present. At some date, during the early period, when the lands of the temple increased and more tenants were needed, this class seems to have immigrated into Śucīndram. In the neighbouring villages of Kākkumūr, Kuṟicci, Paṟakkai, Tērūr and Tāmarakuḷam, the Nāñcinād Veḷḷāḷas constitute the most numerous and powerful section of the landed gentry. Very probably, some families from these adjoining villages were attracted to Śucīndram by the scope of employment particularly as tenants, and managers of the temple property. But the date of their entry into the place cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty. Apparently, a few had settled here earlier than the 10th century, for the inscription of 1000 A.D. refers to '*Paradaikkudiyilār*', but others must have appeared only after the 15th century when there occurred a vast increase in the lands owned by the temple.

It is interesting to observe that the Nāñcinād Veḷḷāḷas, though completely Tamilian in their language, customs, dress and outlook, had adopted a typical Malayāḷi system of inheritance; and hence, the designation 'Marumakkaḷvaḻi Veḷḷāḷas' was applied to them. Tradition has it, that they were originally natives of Pāṇḍinād, and that they immigrated into Nāñcinād sometime in the remote past. It is believed that a dispute arose between the Pāṇḍya and the Vēṇād rulers (probably in the reign of Vīra Kēraḷa of the 12th century A.D.) regarding the sovereignty over Nāñcinād. In order to substantiate his supremacy over the place, the Vēṇād ruler is said to have persuaded the Veḷḷāḷas to utter a false declaration at the Madurai temple that they were Marumakkattāyīs like him. After the ruler had gained his object, he induced them actually to adopt the Marumakkattāyi system of inheritance. For a long time, the new system worked smoothly. But, since the beginning of this century, litigation and discord arose on account of the growth of individualism. Hence, by the Nāñcinād Veḷḷāḷa Regulation of 1925 A.D., the system of inheritance was modified and brought into line with that of the Makkattāyis (viz. from father to son). The only difference is that, besides the sons, the daughters and their children also are given a share in the property of the family.

It is important to remember that these Veḷḷāḷas have always constituted the most dominant people in Nāñcinād. Little wonder, they have rendered great service to the pagoda of Śucīndram. They have

settled many gifts, provided several constructions and embellishments and have played a leading part in the conduct of the Utsavas of the temple.

Naṭṭuvans. The Naṭṭuvans, who are the traditional experts in coaching dancers and singers, seem to have come to Śucīndram at an early date. Belonging invariably to the Dēvaraḍiyār class, they should have appeared about the time when the Dēvadāsis were employed in the temple. With the increase in number and importance of the Dēvadāsis in the pagoda, the position of the Naṭṭuvans also became stronger.

Uvaccans: The pipers, drummers and the conch-blowers, too, were connected with the temple from an early period of its history. They belonged to the class of Pāraśavas or Uvaccans, popularly known as Ōccans. As shown by Winslow, this section of people belongs to a caste of drummers. The Pāraśavas of Śucīndram, like their compeers in the rest of South India, serve also as the officiating priests of Kāḷi temples. At Śucīndram, the conduct of the pūjā and other rites in the Munnūṟṟunankai Amman Kāḷi Kōil is entrusted to the eldest man of an ancient Uvacca family. The tradition that the Kāḷi shrine arose in Śucīndram as early as the main temple may suggest that Uvaccans appeared even with the rise of the brahmadēya. It is perfectly clear from several epigraphs that, in other South Indian temlpes, too, this group of employees figured as early as the 8th and 9th centuries A.D.[18]

Shepherds and Cowherds: The families of shepherds and cowherds have their habitations at the eastern fringe of Śucīndram. Over a dozen houses in Koṟṟayār-tiṭṭai-tteruvu are owned by them. It is probable that members of this class were residing in or about Śucīndram from at least the 10th century A.D. onwards. Some of the earliest inscriptions of Śucīndram refer to gifts of sheep, cows and buffaloes for the supply of ghee to the temple. Obviously, the tending of these cattle did call for the help of the shepherds and cowherds. Further, with the growth in the size and importance of the pagoda, the temple required a large quantity of milk in connection with the abhiṣēkhas and oblations, and it necessitated the permanent service of this class. A palm-leaf record dated 7th Āni 990 M.E. (1815 A.D.) registers a document executed by the cowherds attached to the temple.[19] The record refers to the fact that, for a long time, the cowherds were sup-

18. See, for example, S. I. I., Vol I, p. 108. "Uvaccavari" mentioned in that inscription is evidently a tax on drummers.

19. See Appendix No. 4.

plying to the pagoda the required milk, curd and buttermilk at fixed hours of the day. The document also mentions the interesting fact that the temple itself was maintaining a number of cows.

It does not seem likely that all the cowherds, supplying milk or milk-produce for the temple, were resident in Śucīndram. Particularly, with the increased demand for their service, a good number of this group must have made the neighbouring village of Nallūr their home. Even to-day, there is a considerable population of cowherds in that village. Situated within a couple of miles of Śucīndram, Nallūr was inhabited by a large section of this class, primarily in order to cater to the needs of the Śucīndram pagoda, the biggest consumer in the locality. However, it is not known when exactly they settled in Nallūr.

Kōtukula Sabhaiyār : Quite an interesting group of people, known to have flourished in Śucīndram in the 16th century A.D. and perhaps from an earlier date, is the sect described as 'Kōtukula Sabhaiyār'. An inscription of Vīra Udayamārtāṇḍa Varman, dated 708 M.E.[20] (1532 A.D.), states that the king appointed one Āriyan Cokkan Periyaperumāḷ alias Mārtāṇḍa Brahmādhirāja of Śucīndram for the temple at Tāḻakuḍy. Another epigraph says that the same king appointed Āriyan Cokkan Periyaperumāḷ Mārtāṇḍan Brahmādhirāja, one of the Kōtukula Sabhaiyār of Śucīndram, as accountant of the Piḷḷaiyār Kōil at Tōvāḷai.[21] Certain Kōtukula Sabhaiyār were living in Śucīndram and were employed as accountants in the temple; but, at present, no member of the group is found here. Now certain families of the class flourish in Darśanamkōpe, a village about ten miles north of Śucīndram, and a few others at Tāḻakuḍy, five miles to the north-east of Śucīndram. Commonly described as 'Dyūta Brahmins' Āris or 'Kōtukula Sabhaiyār', they form a distinct group, marked out from the rest of brahmins.

Who they were, what their avocation was, how and when they came to Śucīndram and Nāñcināḍ are interesting, though difficult, questions. The Travancore Census Report of 1901 states that, by traditional occupation, the Āris are ambalavāsis or temple servants, furnishing the equipments of pūjās. But now, no member of the class is employed in that capacity even at Darśanamkōpe. Further, a set of people employed exclusively as ambalavāsis could not have become so

20. T. A. S., VI, p. 131.
21. T. A. S., IV, pp 100 and 101. Perhaps, the accountant appointed for the temple at Tāḻakuḍy and for that at Tōvālai was one and the same person.

rich as they are now found to be at Darśanamkope. Perhaps, only a section of the class had taken to temple service.

The Āyacut (Revenue) records of the Agastīśvaram Taluk reveal that a member of the class was a Sampratipiḷḷai, a local revenue officer. It is interesting to learn that his personal name was Muttu Piḷḷai. In the Āyacut Accounts of the 18th and 19th centuries, the prefix Āri figures before the personal name, for example, as Āri Rāmasubrahmaṇian. But there is no means of knowing the significance of Āri. While tradition holds that they were employed as 'Ānavāḷ' and as accountants in several temples of South Travancore, the designation 'Dyūta brahmins' suggests that they were perhaps employed as 'messengers' or spies by the rulers. A local ballad called 'Aḻakamperumāḷ Ciṟuperumāḷ Kadai' contains the passage *"Kōtukulam pārāṇḍirukkum nāḷil"*, viz., 'during the days when the Kōtukulam was ruling over the land'. Even making allowance for a possible exaggeration, it indicates their dominant political influence in bygone ages.

Members of this community are found at present in parts of the Tirunelvēli and Madurai Districts. They are called by the strange name "Mattiyānappaṟaiyar". In the village of Ambarmāhāḷam of Nannilam Taluk in the Tanjāvūr District, too, we find the group identical with the Āris. They describe themselves as Śukla Yajurvēdins.[22] It is learnt that the priests or the arcakas in the Śrīraṅgam temple are of the same persuasion. Vēdānta Dēśika, the reputed Vaiṣṇava luminary of the 14th century, speaks in praise of the piety of the Śukla Yajurvēdins.

It is needless to state that the Kōtukula Sabhaiyār constitute an interesting class of people. But knowledge about them is scanty. One reason for it is that the entire truth is not revealed by the members of the community. Regarding their advent into Śucīndram and Nāñcināḍ some idea may be gathered from an inscription[23] of Kuṟaṇḍi, a village located a couple of miles to the north of Śucīndram. The inscription records that on the 23rd Mithunam 518 M.E. (1343 A.D.) a chief of Kōtukulam (Dyūta caste) named Śūryan constructed a temple and a well at Kuṟaṇḍi. It is stated that the construction was undertaken under the command of the Kōtukula assembly of Rājakkanēri alias Śrīvallabhamaṅgalam of Kīḻakkaḷakkūṟu in Pāṇḍināḍ, in order to

22. See 'Tanjore District Gazetteer', Vol. I, pp. 78 ff. The vast majority of brahmins are Kṛṣṇa Yajurvēdins.

23. Nagamiah: State Manual, Vol. I, p 263.

commemorate the name of the Vēṇāḍ sovereign, Śrī Vīra Rāma Udaya Mārtāṇḍavarman. Is it likely that the king had invited some members of the group to settle down in Kuṛaṇḍi, Śucīndram and neighbouring places ? The facts, that we do not hear of them earlier and that only in subsequent periods glimpses of them are found, point to that possibility.

SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATION OF THE BRAHMADĒYA

Starting as a tiny hamlet of brahmin settlers, Śucīndram gradually developed into a full-blown village. However, it preserved the distinctive features of a brahmadēya down to recent times. What was the machinery of administration in the brahmadēya in the earliest known epoch and, what changes did it undergo in the succeeding periods ?

It is well known that in the countless brahmadēyās of South India in the past, there flourished a fully developed rural administrative system. Indeed, a more vivid picture about this class of villages and their institutions is available than about the non-brahmadēya type. The celebrated Uttaramērūr inscriptions and the still earlier Mānūr epigraph are the outstanding records which depict the full-fledged rural institutions of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

An initial difficulty appears. Was the constitution of every brahmadēya similar ? Did Śucīndram of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. have the same institutions as Uttaramērūr or Mānūr ? For one thing, even in the latter two brahmadēyās, the known details about the administration do not present an exactly similar picture. Moreover, it appears that although in broad principles of organization, the brahmadēyās of South India had common features, in respect of details, they varied from each other. In the first flush of enthusiasm following the study of the Uttaramērūr inscriptions, scholars like Venkayya, S. K. Aiyangar and Altekar were inclined to hold that the character of rural administration in the whole of South India resembled the pattern of Uttaramērūr.[24] The known facts about several brahmadēyās do not seem to warrant this view. The resemblance in the general organization is, no doubt, striking; but the differences cannot be glossed over.

24. See Venkayya. A. S. I., 1904–5, pp. 138 ff; S. K. Aiyangar: 'Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India', p. 166; Altekar: 'Village Communities in Western India', p. 123.

The two Sabhais : That at Śucīndram, too, there flourished a Mahāsabhai and a Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai in the 10th century A.D. is quite clear from the epigraphs of the place.[25] The Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai appears to have been a small committee or board in charge of the immediate control and direct management of the temple.[26] The membership of the inner body was confined to the leading brahmins of the place. But there is no means of knowing whether any special qualification of age, property or learning was insisted upon for admission to this privileged position. Nor do we know, whether the membership became hereditary or was thrown open to election by the Mahāsabhai. The available epigraphs are silent on these questions. However, if we can judge from the later practice in vogue among the Ūrāṇmaikkār, the virtual successors of the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai, it is presumable that the latter was a hereditary body.[27]

Membership of the Mahāsabhai: Who constituted the members of the Mahāsabhai ? Its designation, as also its powers, may suggest that it was a perfectly democratic body consisting of all the male adults of the village, irrespective of caste or social position. But, such a presumption is not warranted by the known data. In the first place, the village was a brahmadēya, and it is unlikely that any one but brahmins found a place in the Mahāsabhai.[28] Moreover, Rāja Rājā's inscription of 1000 A.D. at Śucīndram affords an indisputable proof of this fact. It states that the Mahāsabhai assembled in the 'Tiruakkiraśālai' of the temple, the dining hall of the brahmins. Certainly, it is inconceivable that members of any caste other than brahmins were admitted into the place. Thus, the Mahāsabhai was an exclusive assembly of the brahmins. But, in those days of social harmony and corporate life in the villages, the Mahāsabhai must have looked after the affairs of the other communities as well; indeed, it formed the general administrative body of the entire village.

It is not known whether all the male adults among the brahmins of the village were members of the Mahāsabhai of Śucīndram. Un-

25. Appendix: Inscriptions: Nos. 4, 13 and 14.

26. See Supra Chapter VI Same is the position of the Mūlaparudaiyār of Kuḍamukkil (Kumbakōṇam) in charge of the temple of Tirunāgēśvaram. See 214 of 1911.

27. See T. A. S., VIII, p. 23.

28. In none of the brahmadēyas, do we find the Mahāsabhai consisting of any member outside the brahmins of the village. In the Ūr, the assembly of the non-brahmadēya village, the position was different.

fortunately, the inscriptions of the place do not enlighten us on this point. Nor do the records of other brahmadēyas prove the prevalence of a uniform practice. The Uttaramērūr inscriptions reveal that all the male inhabitants of the village, including the young and the old, were members of the Mahāsabhai,[29] although certain qualifications were fixed for the constitution of committees. The Mānūr epigraph, on the other hand, lays down specific conditions even for the membership of the Mahāsabhai. It states that, among the children of each shareholder of the village, only one who is well-behaved and has studied the Mantra Brāhmaṇa and one Dharma is eligible. Another son with similar qualifications, who has received a share in the village as Strīdhana also, is entitled to the membership of the assembly The inscription adds further that 'those who purchase shares must elect only such men to represent their shares on the assembly as have critically studied a whole Vēda with its pariśiṣṭās'.[30]

But, neither the Uttaramērūr nor the Mānūr practice affords a conclusive clue on the question of the membership of the Śucīndram Mahāsabhai. Indeed, the more the constitutions of the various brahmadēyas[31] are studied, the more irresistible is the conclusion that, so far as details such as the minimum age and other qualifications of the members are concerned, differences existed among the various brahmadēyas. Convincing proof of the diversity that prevailed regarding qualifications for membership is had from several later Cōla inscriptions, which specify royal orders communicating certain rules regulating the qualifications of the members.[32] Regarding the constitution of the Mahāsabhai of Śucīndram, therefore, we are left only with the data available at the place. And, as noticed before, the Śucīndram epigraphs tell us precious little on the matter. It may be assumed, in the absence of information to the contrary, that all the adult male brahmins of the village were members of the Mahāsabhai.

It is not known whether the Mahāsabhai met at fixed intervals or only when any specific business demanded deliberation. From the few

29. *Ābāla-vṛddhar-amaiya eppērppattārum niramba-kkūdi-irundu*'. See 62 of 1898.

30 E. I., Vol. IX, p. 86.

31. Notice also the difference revealed by the inscription of Tennēri (A. R. E. No. 240 and 241 of 1922); though located in Chingleput District it presents a striking similarity to the Mānūr prescriptions.

32. See, for example, A. R. E. 1927, II, No. 28 and 120 of 1928.

known instances of the summoning of the assembly, it appears that it met only when the need arose for considering any question. It is interesting to learn that the members were summoned to attend the meeting by the sounding of the bugles (*Kāḷamūdiviccu*), and also perhaps by the beating of drums (*Kuṟiśātti*).[33] That the members of the Mahāsabhai at Śucīndram formed a considerable number and that the meetings of the Mahāsabhai were well attended are evident from the lithic records.[34]

Was there any fixed place where the Mahāsabhai met for transacting its business ? Very probably, no particular hall or specified place was used for the purpose. From the available references in the epigraphs, we can only conclude that the Sabhai met somewhere within the precincts of the temple. However, it was not at any fixed place in the temple that the meeting was held. An inscription of the 15th year of Rāja Rāja states that the assembly met in the 'akkiraśālai', the 'feeding hall of the temple',[35] while another of the 24th year of Uḍaiyār Śrī Cōḷa Pāṇḍya[36] has it that the Mahāsabhai assembled in the Maṇiambalam. The inscriptions of 1216 A.D. and of 1257 A.D.[37] state that the Sabhai met at Tiruccuṟṟu Maṇḍapam.[38]

Functions of the Mahāsabhai: The most striking fact revealed by the epigraphs of Śucīndram and of other brahmadēyas is that the assem-

33. The same manner of summons was adopted in other places of South India; See A. R. E. 85 of 1896; 103 of 1897; 72 of 1914 and 553 of 1921.

34. For example, "கூட்டம் நிரம்பக் கூடியிருக்க (T. A S., II, p. 7), கூட்டம் குறைவறக் கூடியிருந்து (T. A. S., IV, p. 138), சபையம் பெருமக்கள் குறைவற இருந்து (Inscription of 432 M. E. App. Inscription No. 52), கூட்டங் குறைவறக்கூடி (T. A. S., VIII, p. 37). However, one may suspect that these set expressions occurring in the inscriptions of Śucīndram and of many other places are more conventional than literally accurate.

35. T. A. S., II, p. 7.

36. T. A. S., IV, p. 38; See Supra Chapter V, for the identification of Mani Ambalam.

37. T. A S., VIII, p 37 and Ibid. p. 34.

38. Epigraphs of other brahmadēyas reveal that the meetings were not always held within the temple The foot of a shady tree served at times as the House of Parliament! For example, the assembly of Parikkuḍi alias Niṭṭavindōda Caturvēdimangalam is known to have once met under a tamarind tree (A. R. E 1910, p. 90.) Again, the Sabhai of Nālūr, is similarly stated to have assembled under a tamarind tree (A. R. E., 1911, p. 75). Another instance of meeting beneath a tamarind tree is learnt from Brahmadēśam in North Arcot District (No. 260 of 1915). Prof. K. A N. Sastri suggests that these meetings were held outside the village because the matter considered was not of auspicious import (Cōla Studies, p. 94).

bly was primarily concerned with the affairs of the temple. In truth, innumerable South Indian inscriptions show the pre-occupation of the Mahāsabhais with temples and religious charities. The supervision and control of the routine management of the temple, the appointment of the priests and other members of the temple staff as well as the arrangements for the administration of the numerous endowments made to the temple, dominated the attention of the Mahāsabhai.[39] This remarkable feature is explained by the circumstance that, in the brahmadēyas, the temple and the village were for all practical purposes co-terminous ; the village apart from the temple, had no independent status.

Equally striking is the undifferentiated nature of the functions discharged by the Sabhai What, according to modern terminology, may be classed as legislative, executive and judicial functions, all came under the purview of the Mahāsabhai. It accepted the gifts of land, money or sheep and passed them on to the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai with the necessary instructions.[40] Besides, it was the Mahāsabhai which determined the distribution of houses, and house-sites in the village, the acquisition of land and alienation of property by sale or mortgage. This right of disposal of land exercised by the assembly proves that some land in the village was held and administered in common by the brahmadēyas.

Among the activities of the Sabhai, the improvement of agriculture appears to have been prominent. The Sabhai itself was a wealthy land-owner and its income came principally from land. For the inhabitants of the village, too, agriculture was of supreme concern, as it was the mainstay of their economic life. Provision and improvement of irrigation facilities received the careful attention they deserved. The mention of the Amarabhujaṅga Vāykkāl,[41] Marudaguṇa Vāykkāl,[42] Tiruveṅgaḍa Vāykkāl,[43] Puttan Vāykkāl,[44] Indrapuri Vāykkāl,[45] Ainnūṟṟu Vāykkāl,[46] in some of the very early inscriptions of Śucīndram, suggest that in and around the newly constituted brahmadēya, a net-work of

39. The dividing line between the Mahāsabhai and the Mūlaparuda-Sabhai was not always clear. It was not uncommon for the Mahāsabhai to discharge functions which strictly belonged to the smaller body.

40. At times, the Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai was empowered to receive the endowments direct ; but, evidently, it was done with the tacit approval of the bigger body.

41. T. A. S., IV, p. 138

42. Ibid, p. 119.

43. Ibid, p. 119.

44. Ibid, p. 132.

45. Ibid, p. 132.

46. Ibid, p. 132.

canals was dug, very probably under the orders of the Mahāsabhai. Moreover, several tanks in and about Śucīndram are mentioned even by the early epigraphs, for example, Nambi Śāstāṅkuḷam,[47] Vētkaik-kuḷam,[48] Puttanēri,[49] Kannaṅkulam,[50] and Ciṟṟilaṅkuḷam.[51] Whether or not these tanks were dug under the orders of the Sabhai is unknown; but, doubtless, the supervision of all the canals and tanks was left to this body. We have, however, no evidence yet of the functioning of an Ēri-vāriyam in Śucīndram as in Uttaramērūr.

The maintenance of the roads and streets of the village was also under the purview of the assembly. Among the early epigraphs, the only reference yet known, is to the Peruvaḻi[52] running to the north of Nambi Śāstāṅkuḷam. It is interesting to learn that the Peruvaḷi was almost identical with the present Main Trunk Road just to the north of Śucīndram.

Many were the administrative activities of the Mahāsabhai. But, apparently, no information is to be had about some important aspects of the working of the Sabhai. We do not know whether it functioned through standing committees. Besides the celebrated Uttaramērūr inscriptions, many others, too, speak of vāriyams or committees in charge of various executive functions.[53] But, with reference to Śucīndram, in the absence of information to the contrary, it may be assumed that the Sabhai, as a body, attended to the entire business.

The judicial functions exercised by the Mahāsabhai are not less remarkable. The inscription of the 19th year of Cōḷan talai koṇda Vīra Pāṇḍya records how a complaint was laid before the Mahāsabhai that one Vaṅganṟa Dēvan mortgaged and sold Dēvadāna lands. An explanation of his unwarranted conduct was demanded of the offender. The decision of the assembly, interesting as it must be, is unknown, because the inscription has been partly covered by a new wall. In fact, the administration of justice appears to have been an important function. Several epigraphs of Śucīndram prescribe the penalty for failure to

47. Idem. VIII, p. 37
48 T. A. S, IV, p. 95.
49. Ibid, p. 132
50 Idem. VIII, p. 35.
51. Ibid, p. 35.
52. T. A. S., IV, p 37.
53. For example, see A. R. E. 240 and 241 of 1922; S I. I., Vol. III, 156 and S. I. I, Vol. III, 99.

render any service agreed upon by contract.[54] The epoch-making inscription of 404 M.E. (1228 A.D.) records how any one of the trustees (Ūrāṇmaikkār), attempting to sell or mortgage the property allotted to him, was to forfeit his property to the Sabhai, and in addition, was to pay a penalty. These instances prove that the Mahāsabhai not only laid down laws, but also administered and enforced them.

Royal control : Was the Mahāsabhai given a perfectly free hand in the discharge of its duties ? Was any control exercised by the government of the day ? The available data seem to indicate that normally the Sabhai carried on its activities without interference from royal authority. It is only when any alteration in the disposal of the tax or the enforcement of any royal decree had to be effected, that an officer or Adhikāri appeared on the scene. For example, the inscription of the 14th year of Rāja Rāja states that at the instance of Periyān Mūvēnda Vēḷār, evidently a royal officer, the tax on certain tax-paying lands was enhanced and was arranged to be brought to the temple.

A General appears to have been stationed in the place for the enforcement of peace and order in the locality. Some inscriptions of the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. reveal that a military commander was permanently residing in Śucīndram. Doubtless, this was the case during the period of the Early Cōḷas and of the Cōḷa Pāṇḍya Viceroys. Evidence of this is found in the Śucīndram inscriptions of Rāja Rāja and of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Cōḷa Pāṇḍya.[55] Of these records the first speaks of *Paḍaittaruman Kaṇaiyān of Veṭṭikkuḍi,* while the second refers to *'Ivvūr Paḍaittalavan Kāvaṇai Karuvūrāṉa Tiruvēṅgaḍa Eṭṭiyeṉ'*.

A remarkable feature is that both these military chieftains are stated to have been entrusted with the responsibility of furnishing a stipulated quantity of ghee to the temple. When gifts of sheep and cows were bestowed by donors, the Sabhai passed them on to the commanders who were to fulfil the terms of the endowments. But this curious practice does not seem to have been peculiar to Śucīndram alone. A Cōḷapuram inscription of the 39th year of Kulōttunga Cōḷa I[56] runs thus *'Tirunanda viḷakkonṟukku Kōṭṭāṟṟu nilappaḍai taraṇiviccādirattarumbil paḍayilāntamiḷan Māṇikkam vaśam viṭṭa śāvāmūvāppērāḍu'*. A similar arrangement is mentioned in the Kanyākumari

54. See, for example, inscriptions of 404 M. E. and 421 M. E. (Appendix).
55. T. A. S., I, p. 238 and Idem. IV, p. 135.
56. T. A. S., I, p. 247.

inscription of the 31st year of Rājēndra Cōḷa.[57] The intriguing question is why the military commander was chosen to bear this responsibility. The only explanation seems to be that the military authority and social standing commanded by the Generals prompted the Sabhai to entrust them with this duty. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that this practice illustrates the rough and ready procedure adopted and the absence of distinction between civil and military functions.

The Mahāsabhai formally continued to exist for several centuries. We hear of it so late as 1705 A.D. But, practically from the 13th century A.D. the Mahāsabhai was left only with the shadow of its old powers. In the first place, we find royal officers figuring more prominently than before in Śucīndram, Cōḷapuram, Puravaśśēri and other places of Nāñcināḍ.[58] Perhaps, the closer contact of the officers affected the position and powers of the Mahāsabhai. More than that, it is the rise of the Yōgakkār, practically from the 13th century that caused the decline of the Mahāsabhai's authority. In due course, these new colonists supported by the fiat of the sovereigns' authority, dominated the older Mahāsabhai and became the virtual managers of the temple and of the village. As years rolled on, the Ūrāḷar controlled every aspect of the activities of the temple, and with it, of the village, too. Ūrāḷar, literally means the rulers of the village, viz., the headmen, the city fathers. 'In the long run, these Ūrāḷar, as hereditary trustees of temples, became really the owners of temples, and more especially so, of their landed property'.[59]

The dominance of the Ūrāṇmaikkār over the village is amply attested to by the palm-leaf records. The significant fact that the house-sites in Śucīndram were settled on particular individuals by the Ūrāṇmaikkār shows clearly that they were the owners of the village. Until recently, the private occupiers of house-sites were paying rents called *Kuppakkācci* to particular Ūrāṇmaikkār. This right was commuted into a lump sum payment to the respective Ūrāṇmaikkār by the Government of Travancore in 1895 A.D.

Thus the Ūrāṇmaikkār were, as it were, the inheritors of the powers of the old Mahāsabhai, as well as of the more active Mūlaparuḍa Sabhai. Their dominance increased day by day. They formed an 'imperium in imperio' in the State. It was left to the masterly

57. Ibid, p 241.
58. See T. A. S., IV, p. 17; and p. 21, and Idem. VII, pp. 9 ff
59. Idem. II, p. 138.

Mārtāṇḍavarma to make inroads into the authority of these bloated vassals. With the assumption of the management of the temple by the State in 987 M.E. or 1812 A.D., the pagoda and the village were relieved of their domination. The Ūrāṇmaikkār still continue to have certain privileges in connection with the ceremonies of the pagoda; but they are merely empty survivals of their past glory.

SECTION 3: THE TEMPLE — A 'SANKĒTAM'

The enormous power wielded by the Yōgakkār from about the 14th to the 19th century A.D. is a well-known fact. The question arises as to whether the Yōgakkār or the Government maintained civil and criminal jurisdiction over the place during that period. The available data point to the probability that it was the body of Yōgakkār that exercised the supreme civil and criminal authority. The fact that Śucīndram was considered as a Sankētam supports that view. Several records describe Śucīndram as a Sankētam. For example, the resolution passed by the Nāṭṭār at Īśāntimaṅgalam on 15th Vaikāśi 894 M.E. (1719 A.D.) states that, as Śucīndram was a Sankētam, the people sought refuge at the place when they were harassed by the Nāyak invaders.[60] Again, the royal order sent to the Valiya Śrī Kāryakkār of the Śucīndram temple on 10th Āḍi 948 M E. (1773 A.D.) described the place as a Sankētam.[61] More specific is the reference in the Agastīśvaram Taluk Record, dated 20th Alpaśi 921 M.E. (1745 A.D.), which enlightens us on the extent of the Śucīndram Sankētam. It shows that, not only the pagoda and the inhabited portion of the village, but even the lands owned by the temple were comprised within the Sankētam.[62]

Sankētam, a conception peculiar to the West Coast, has been defined as 'the territorial extent of the independent jurisdiction, spiritual and temporal, of a pagoda (ksētra sankētam) or of a brahmin community in a particular locality (grāma sankētam) within the limits of which,

60. 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts' No. 19.

61 "ശുചീന്ദ്രം പെരുമാറും താണുമാലയപ്പെരുമാറും സ്വാമി വകയ്ക്കു് സങ്കേതം ഉൾപ്പെട്ട ദേവസ്വത്തെ ഒഴുകും പോതും ആയക്കെട്ടും തിരട്ടും." See Travancore Land Revenue Manual, V, p. 100.

62 "ശുചീന്ദ്രം സഭയിൽ അവർകളും വശം ശുചീന്ദ്രം സങ്കേതം എല്ക്കയിൽ ആററിനു കിഴക്കുള്ള നിലങ്ങളും, കുളങ്ങളും, കാട്ടു്, കരക്കാട്ടു് ഉൾപ്പെട്ട വക നാളതു ചോരാ ഒററിയായി എഴുതി വാങ്ങിയതിൽ...." Ibid V, p. 9.

no acts calculated to pollute the temple or the community were permitted by immemorial customs'.[63] The description furnished by A. S. Ramanatha Aiyar is more vivid. He says:[64] 'Sankētam is the name of a religious corporation. The lands belonging to a temple were under the control of a separately constituted body of members, who in olden days, wielded unlimited powers within their jurisdiction. Even the king had no control over these corporations except in a general way. The lands belonging to the temples and managed by the Yōgams were also exempt from the payment of certain taxes and were under a special form of tenure.' K. P. P. Menon defines a Sankētam as the place where unlimited supreme power was exercised by the Dēvasvam authorities.[65] Dr. Gundert, on the other hand, is content with defining a Sankētam as an asylum and as a holy refuge exempt from war and profanation.[66]

Clearly, two features were implied in a 'Sankētam'. One was the sacredness of the place for maintaining which, all kinds of pollution or intrusion by profane people were to be prevented. The second, and more important feature was that, the Sankētam exercised a jurisdiction over the inhabitants of the locality independent of the ruling power.

That during its palmy days, the Mahāsabhai enjoyed supreme authority over the people, has been observed already. But did the Ūrāṇmaikkār of later days continue to exercise the same power? The question, whether the privilege of a Sankētam conferred on the Yōgakkār merely the right of preventing any kind of pollution in the place or the supreme civil and criminal jurisdiction over its inhabitants, was vehemently discussed between the Travancore and the Cochin States in connection with the dispute regarding the Sankētam rights attached

63. T. A R. 1103, p 8.
64. T. A S, V, p. 207.
65. K. P. Padmanabha Menon in his 'Kocci Rājyacaritram', Chapter 9, pp. 186-7, says ·

"ദേവസ്വങ്ങളുടെ സങ്കേത അതിൎത്തിക്കകത്തു രാജ്യാധികാരം കൂടി ദേവസ്വം അധികാരികളാണു് നടത്തിയിരുന്നതു്... ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ പറയുന്നതായാൽ, ഒരു സങ്കേതം എന്നു വെച്ചാൽ, സൎവ്വസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തോടു കൂടി ബ്രാഹ്മണ യോഗത്തിലേയോ ദേവസ്വത്തിലേയോ അംഗങ്ങളാൽ തിരഞ്ഞു് എടുക്കപ്പെട്ട അധികാരികളോടും രക്ഷകനോടും കൂടി ഭരിച്ചു വന്ന ഒരു പ്രദേശമാകുന്നു."

66. Malayalam Dictionary, p. 1028.

to the Elaṅgunnappuḷa and Annamanāda temples. The Travancore Government, supported by learned Nambūdiris, argued that the Sankētams enjoyed independent jurisdiction, while the Cochin Government, on the other hand, held that, excepting the prevention of pollution, no other control over the citizens was exercised. J C. Hannington, the Arbitrator in the dispute, accepted the views of the Cochin authorities.

But it is doubtful whether his verdict is applicable to all Sankētams. At any rate, with reference to those in Travancore, the overwhelming evidence points to the fact of independent jurisdiction enjoyed by the Yōgakkār. The testimony of foreign writers supports it. Gouvea in 'Journada' describes Ceṅgannūr in North Travancore as a Sankētam; and Hough, who wrote on the authority of Gouvea, says: "This town, Ceṅgannūr, is said to have been more celebrated for the worship of idols than any other in Malabār. In fact, the country itself was the property of a pagoda or temple, whose brahmins exercised sovereign power and appointed governors and subordinate officers throughout the province."[67] Further, the Grandhavari of the temple at Vaikom in North Travancore states clearly that it was the duty of the Nambūdiris of the village to report to the Samudāya Yōgam, i.e., to the committee of management, any crimes or derelictions of duty committed by any one in their respective divisions. Thereupon, the Samudāya-Yōgam summoned the offender to their presence, investigated the charges, and inflicted punishments on the convicted.[68] It is remarkable that even monarchs were fined by the Yōgakkār for high-handed acts committed by them within the limits of the Sankētam. The records of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple present several such instances during the period ranging from 500 M.E. (1325 A.D.) to 902 M.E. (1727 A.D.)[69]

Shankunny Menon, on the basis of the temple records, writes[70] thus: "These Dēvasvams became possessed of immense wealth and landed

67. Hough: 'History of Christianity in India', Vol. II, pp. 175-76.

68. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: 'History of Kērala', Vol IV, pp. 96-97.

69. See Shankunny Menon: 'History of Travancore', pp. 96-98; K. P. P. Menon: 'History of Kērala', Vol. IV, pp. 100-101; K. P. P. Menon: 'Kocci Rājya Caritram', Chapter IX, pp. 189-192 and T. K. V. Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 205.

70. 'History of Travancore', pp. 79-80. The passages are quoted in extenso, for they furnish a vivid picture of the conditions that must have prevailed in Śucīndram also. It is significant that the Yōgakkār in Śucīndram were of the same persuasion as those in the temples of Trivandrum, Vaikom, etc. Some of the Yōgakkār of Trivandrum and Śucīndram were identical. These circumstances leave no room for doubt that the nature of the rule of the Yōgakkār in Śucīndram was similar to that in Trivandrum.

property to which numerous tenants were attached and who established themselves as ryots or subjects, so much so, that the Dēvasvam Managers and trustees enacted rules and laws for the management of the Dēvasvam property and began to enforce these laws, independent of the king within the limits of the landed property." He adds further: 'Tradition shows that the life and property of the Dēvasvam tenants were at the mercy of the Dēvasvam community. In every pagoda, before the commencement of the annual Utsavam festival, which generally begins by a flag being hoisted, such of the Dēvasvam tenants as had committed any breach of the Dēvasvam rules were gibbetted before the hoisting of the flag and the commencement of the Utsavam."[71] As observed earlier, the Yōgakkār of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum and those at Śucīndram had many things in common between them. Therefore, it is likely that the position and powers of the Yōgakkār were similar in both the places. Popular tradition in Śucīndram accords with the facts stated above. Astounding stories of the high-handedness of the Yōgakkār are still current in the locality.

SECTION 4 THE TEMPLE — A PLACE OF SHELTER

The fact that Śucīndram was a Sankētam meant not only that it enjoyed independent jurisdiction, but also that it had the right of preventing any kind of pollution to the place. The locality within the limits of the Sankētam was considered sacrosanct and inviolable. Naturally, this privilege conferred an immunity from any profane attack. By virtue of this circumstance the people, not only of Śucīndram but even of the neighbouring villages, enjoyed the protection that the Sankētam afforded. The Īśāntimangalam resolution of 15th Vaikāśi 894 M.E. (1719) A.D.), referred to already, records[72] how the people of Nāñcināḍ, with their valuable possessions sought the protection of the sacred precincts of Śucīndram. On that occasion, however, the unscrupulous Nāyak hordes, utterly disregarding the sanctity of the place, set fire to houses in Śucīndram and Āśrāmam, and consequently, much damage was caused.

71. See K. P. P. Menon: 'Kocci Rājyacaritram', pp. 193-98 for a description of the jurisdiction and control exercised by the Sankētams of various temples in North Travancore and Cochin.

72 சிவிந்திரத்தில சுவாமியுட சங்கேதமானபடியினுலே அவிடமொரு ஒதுக்கிடமென்று சொல்லி நாட்டிலுண்டான பெட்டி பிரமாணம் பொன் வெள்ளி வெங்கல பாத்திரமும் சீலை பிடவைகளும் நெல்லும் வித்தும் படைகடத்திக் கொண்டுபோட்ட வகையெல்லாம —

"Mudaliyār Manuscripts." No. 19.

On other occasions when the Nāyaks invaded the regions in the neighbourhood of Śucīndram — and these were not a few — the sanctity of the pagoda doubtless afforded protection to the refugees. In the earlier periods, too, when the Cōlās, Cōḷa Pāṇḍyas and the Vēṇāḍ rulers invaded Nāñcināḍ from time to time, the inviolability of the temple ensured safety for Śucīndram and its neighbourhood. Commencing from the days of the Early Pāṇḍyas, Nāñcināḍ, and particularly Kōṭṭāṟ, the Metropolis, became the cockpit of the South; and during times of danger and insecurity, many people from the rich town would have sought refuge within the precincts of the temple. The circumstance that the pagoda constituted a place of refuge was not peculiar to Śucīndram. Several instances of temples having served as forts in times of danger have come down to us from the early history of South India.[73] In Travancore itself, so late as the 18th century A.D. one of the Āṟṟiṅgal Rāṇis protected herself against the attack of a force from Kāyaṅkuḷam by taking shelter within the Sankētam of the neighbouring temple.[74]

In the palmy days of the Yōgakkār at Śucīndram, they tried to defend the temple against any unforeseen incursions by improvising a motley host comprising the tenants, temple servants and citizens. Whenever they heard the rumblings of the march of troops at a distance, they sent their ill-organized 'army' to encounter them. The villages of Mailāḍi and Īttankāḍ in the south-west and Kākkumūr[75] in the south-east were the places, where, invariably the advancing forces were intercepted by the improvised forces proceeding from Śucīndram. It was in connection with the expedition despatched to intercept Candā Sāhib's attack in 1740 A.D. that a contemporary member of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha was killed in the combat at Īttaṅkāḍ.[75] Though these precautions were adopted, the attacks on Śucīndram were fortunately few. The only two known cases when the sacredness of the temple failed to afford protection to the place were the invasions of the Nāyaks in 894 M.E. (1719 A.D.) and of Candā Sāhib in 915 M.E. (1740 A.D.). But they were exceptions; the rule was that the sanctity of the temple was respected.

73. See for examples A. R. E. 167 of 1909 and A. R. E. 1932-33, p 68.

74 T. K. Velu Pillai: 'State Manual', Vol. II, p. 204.

75. The village, 'Kākkumūr', itself owed its change of appellation from its earlier name Tenvalanallūr to the circumstance that it formed the first line of defence for Śucīndram in the south-west (Kākkum = Protecting; Ūr = Village).

SECTION 5: THE TEMPLE — THE CENTRE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

It was not only to seek protection against invaders that people flocked to the temple. The pagoda was the very centre and pivot of the life of the people. The temple was really the busiest spot in the entire region. From early dawn till late at night, people used to throng in large numbers for offering worship or for participating in the ceremonies and festivals. The pagoda was often packed to overflowing with the rich and the poor alike.

Caste distinctions regarding entry into the temple: But, while distinctions of wealth were not ostensibly felt among worshippers in the temple, social distinctions of caste were enforced with the utmost severity. In fact, the restrictions of caste were more rigorous in Śucīndram and other temples of the West Coast, than in the rest of South India. This was the result, in a large measure, of the domination of the Nambūdiri arcakas and the Pōṟṟi Yōgakkār. Down to a very recent date, the distinctions of caste regulated the entry of particular classes of people into the various parts of the pagoda. The inhibitions sanctioned by the Āgamic prescriptions and by time-honoured custom were most meticulously observed. Even the slightest infringement of the rules was visited with condign punishment. Several instances of penalties inflicted by the Yōgakkār are mentioned in the records of the temple. Besides, society itself viewed such lapses with alarm, and disputes as well as riots, consequent upon violations of the rules, have not been rare.

In the first place, people in the lowest rung of the caste system were not allowed to enter the streets of Śucīndram. Avarṇas, the Untouchables or the Depressed classes, as they have been variously called, were the Paṟiahs, Nāḍārs, Pulayās, Paḷḷans, the Kuḻuvās, etc. No spot in Śucīndram was to be polluted by their entry.

Immediately above them were believed to be the Īḻavās, Washermen and Barbers, who were admitted into the streets, but not into the temple. It must be added that, during the annual Utsavas, when the images were carried in procession through the streets, people of the last-mentioned castes were debarred from access to the streets, too. Prior to the flag-hoisting ceremony, screens (Teru-maṟaccān) were put up at the entrance to all the main streets, proclaiming the prohibition of entry to the forbidden classes. The groups higher than those enumerated above were allowed entrance within the precints of the

temple up to the Dhvajastambha, but not beyond. The Vairāvis, Cāliyās, Potters, and Oil-mongers fell under this category.

The so-called higher castes among the non-brahmins like the Veḷḷāḷas, Nāirs, Ceṭṭis and Dāsis were admitted into the Ardhamaṇḍapa and the Tirucuṟṟu Mandapa to the back of the Garbhagṛha. In fact, the prohibited sphere in their case was only the Garbhagrha and the enclosed portico just in front of it. Brahmins other than the Nambūdiris were practically in the same position as the high caste non-brahmins; only, they could get inside the Ṛsabha Maṇdapa to offer worship. Besides, before 1928 A.D., the prasādam or holy ash was given in the hands of brahmins by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi or his assistant, while it was thrown on a raised platform of stone near the Ṛṣabha Manḍapa to be picked up by the non-brahmin worshippers. As a result of a popular agitation, it was decided by the Government that, in all the temples of the State, the prasādam should be given to each individual in his hands.

No one, except a Nambūdiri or a member of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi group, is permitted to enter the portico in front of the Garbhagṛha, while none but a Nambūdiri is entitled to step into the Garbhagṛha, the sanctum sanctorum of both Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam. For centuries these injunctions were religiously enforced. Nor were these restrictions challenged for a long time. Traditional custom secured unquestioning adherence to the regulations of caste regarding entry into temples.

Early in the present century a keen agitation arose in order to remove the barriers against temple entry. The total exclusion of "avarṇās" from the temple was held to be a blot on Hinduism, and its removal was urged by liberal-minded reformers. The movement, favoured by those who had received English education, was actively fostered by the Indian National Congress. The agitation gathered momentum in Travancore; and in Śucīndram, as well as in Vaikom, a Satyāgraha (Passive Resistance) was started in 1923. The aim of the agitators was primarily to secure the admission of the 'Untouchables' to the streets of these sacred villages. The Satyāgraha at Śucīndram was conducted at the entrance to the Sannadhi Street, and it created a great sensation. The leaders of the Satyāgraha were mostly members of the higher castes. Ill-feeling arose between certain sections of the orthodox communities on the one hand, and between the avarṇas and some conservative group of caste Hindus on the other. Public

tranquillity was threatened. However, through the intervention of the Congress leaders, the Satyāgraha was eventually suspended

The Temple Entry Proclamation The thorny question was not finally settled until the issue of the momentous Temple Entry Proclamation by the Government of His Highness Śri Citra Tirunāḷ Mahārāja in November 1936. As a result of this epoch-making proclamation, all Hindus, irrespective of caste, are allowed entry into the temples of Travancore. Conservative opinion was, no doubt, reluctant to reconcile itself to the change. But the bold policy of the ruler, and his able Dewan Sri C P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, finally triumphed A great achievement, this step marks an epoch in the history of Hinduism, and has set an inspiring example to the rest of India. It may be added that in Śucīndram and elsewhere in Travancore, orthodox opinion has now adjusted itself to the change. So far as the avarṇās themselves are concerned, they evince a well-merited enthusiasm It is gratifying to learn from the Śucīndram Dēvasvam authorities that during the year 1943 the average number of the visitors of this class per day was seventy-four.

The temple the pivot of religious life: We resume the consideration of the role of the temple as a centre of religious activity. All, except the prohibited classes, used to come to the pagoda in large numbers to worship or to witness the ceremonies and festivals. Not only brahmins, but members of the savarṇa or caste-hindu classes, living in and near Śucīndram, made it their unfailing duty to offer their worship in the temple, in the morning, noon, or evening. As years passed on, there developed a varied and complex routine of rituals sustained by the rich accumulations of land and gold, the result of pious gifts. The more numerous and the more varied the rituals and ceremonies, the greater the attraction for people.

While the temple served as the very hub of the everyday life of the inhabitants of Śucīndram and its neighbourhood, it attracted, on specially sacred or festive occasions, enormous crowds of people from far and near. Mondays (Sōmavārams) of every week, and particularly Mondays of the month of Kārtikai, Pradōsams, Ēkādaśi, New Moon and Full Moon days are held as specially sacred occasions for worship in the pagoda. Besides, celebrations like Śrī Jayanti, Tirukkalyāṇam, Tai Pūśam and Kārtikai Dīpam have attracted a considerable number of visitors. But, by far the largest crowds of people are drawn to Śucīndram from far and near during the Mahōtsavas.

Since about the 15th century A.D., the Utsavas have assumed prominence, and with the increase in the income of the temple, the celebrations have acquired a growing splendour. Though in recent times, many persons have been attracted by the festivities and merriment afforded by the Utsavas, in the earlier periods, it is likely that the sanctity of celebration weighed most with the visitors.

SECTION 6. THE TEMPLE — THE PATRON OF CULTURE

By far the greatest contribution of the Śucīndram temple has been its preservation and promotion of the intellectual culture and fine arts of the land. The temple was not merely a place of worship. It became, in the fullness of time, a nucleus which gathered round itself all that was best in the arts of civilized existence Like several others of its kind, the Śucīndram temple became a live centre of culture.

Brahmadēyas had always laid great emphasis upon the need for learning the Vēdās, the Brāhmaṇās, Mantras, etc. And the temple, the heart and soul of the life of the brahmins, naturally developed into a centre of learning. The reference to the Adhyayanan in the earliest of the palm-leaf records of the Śucīndram temple suggests that the teaching of the Vēda was one of the activities undertaken from an early age.

Educational activity : Unfortunately, the data that the inscriptions of Śucīndram furnish on this matter are not as full as one may wish. But negative evidence on such questions has to be used with caution. On the other hand, the information available from other early temples indicates the probable line of development here, too. Regarding the educational activity of the ancient temples of South India, the knowledge gained is amazing. Epigraphs at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr speak of the recital and teaching of Prabhākar, Rudra, Yāmaḷa, Purāṇa, Śivadharma, Pañcāṅga and Bhārata. Besides sacred literature, even subjects like Vyākaraṇa (Grammar) and Astrology were taught.[76] Again, the celebrated inscription of Rājēndra Cōḷa at Eṇṇāyiram registers an endowment for the maintenance of a college for Vēdic studies.[77] The famous inscription of Vīra Rājēndra at Tirumukkūḍal refers to a school maintained in the Jñāṇa Maṇḍapa in the temple for the study of the Vēdās, Śāstrās, Grammar, etc.[78] Epigraphs in several other temples, too, record similar arrangements.[79]

76 A R E 1913, p. 110.
77. A. R. E. 333 of 1917.
78. S I I., Vol. III, Part I, p. 93, and E. I. Vol XXI, pp 220 ff
79. See A. R. E. 63 of 1897 ; and 163 of 1909 , S. I. I., Vol. I, p. 47.

It is remarkable that educational activities were not confined to the Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa dominions. The land of the Āy's, under whom Śucīndram and Nāñcinād flourished in early times, was equally famous for such institutions. The Śālai of Miñcirai,[80] the Śrīvallabhapperuñcālai at Kanyākumari and the celebrated Kāndaḷūr Śālai are well known. Again, at Puravaśśēri, quite in the neighbourhood of Śucīndram, is found an inscription of 372 M.E. (1196 A.D.) which registers a gift of land as Kiḍaivṛitti for maintaining two teachers to expound the Ṛig and Yajur Vēdās.[81]

Apart from the pāṭaśālas or schools instanced above, which were intended exclusively for brahmin pupils, there existed also scope for popular education. In most of the South Indian temples, there were spacious halls or maṇḍapas, where the recitation and exposition of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, and the Purāṇās took place. In the temple at Śucīndram, the Mahābhārata Kaḻakam was the place set apart for this purpose.

Mahābhārata Kaḻakam. When was the practice of expounding the Mahābhārata instituted in Śucīndram? Neither the inscriptions, nor the palm-leaf records of the temple throw light on the question. But, judged by the data available from many ancient temples of South India, it does not seem improbable that it appeared in Śucindram earlier than the 12th century A.D. Besides similar practices in Tamiḻ Nāḍ proper, as at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, Eṇṇāyiram, Tirumukkūḍal and Tṛibhuvani, it is significant that the custom was not unknown in the West Coast, too. We find at Tirukkaḍittāṉam, not far away from Śucīndram, an inscription of Bhāskara Ravi Varman, assignable, to the last decade of the 10th century A.D., which mentions the practice of reciting the Mahābhārata. Is it too much to suggest that this hoary custom had found its way into Śucīndram before the 12th century A.D. ?

Recitation of Tamiḻ hymns: The recitations in the Śucīndram temple, as in others of its kind, were not confined to the Samskṛit Vēda. That the practice of reciting Tiruppadigam, i.e., hymns of the Dēvāram, Tiruvācagam, and Tiruppallāṇḍu was in vogue long before 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.) is evident from the temple Accounts of that date. Further, a palm-leaf record of 1042 M.E. specifically states that the practice was in force long before 915 M.E. (1740 A.D.)[82] It would be interesting to

80 T A S, I, pp 5-10.
81. Idem. VII, p. 14.
82. See Appendix No 5.

know when the practice of singing Tiruppadigam was introduced into Śucīndram. From 12th century A.D., the temple was under the influence of the Vēṇāḍ kings and the Malayāḷi arcakas. Hence, it is improbable that the practice was introduced subsequent to the 12th century. To this day, it is a time-honoured maxim in the Śucīndram pagoda that age-long practices should not be altered. Therefore, even after the advent of the Nambūdiri Tantri and Nambudiri arcakas, the singing of Tiruppadigam, which was probably instituted earlier, was continued without a break.

The history of the Tiruppadigam recitation in other South Indian temples may throw light on the probable date of its introduction into Śucīndram. The practice of chanting Tiruppadigams must have commenced as early as the reign of the Pallava king Vijaya Nandi Vikrama Varman. This is suggested by the Tiruvallam inscription, which enumerates the reciters of the Tiruppadigam among the employees of the temple.[83] And, from the reign of Parāntaka Cōḷa onwards, numerous inscriptions speak of endowments made for the recitation of Tiruppadigam and Tiruvāymoḻi.[84] What is more, an epigraph of Rājēndra I mentions a 'Dēvāranāyakam', obviously a Superintendent of Dēvāram. This suggests the existence of a department of State, which supervised and controlled the performance of this service in various temples.[85] In the light of these facts, it is but natural to assume that the practice had found its way into Śucīndram during the period of the Early Cōḷas, or of the Cōḷa Pāṇḍya Viceroys, at the latest. There was a conscious importation of Cōḷa institutions, religious, political and economic, into Nāñcināḍ. Probably, the singing of the Tiruppadigam was one of the innovations introduced into the temples of the region. And Śucīndram is not the only place which could have adopted this sacred custom. Almost every temple of note in Nāñcināḍ observes the practice. Particularly significant is the reference to the endowment made for chanting Tiruvāymoḻi in the Puravaśśēri temple.[86]

Besides sacred literature and devotional songs, music and dance formed a part of the Nityōtsavās or the daily rituals. Doubtless, they

83. S. I I, Vol. III, p. 93, ll. 32-3.

84. e.g. A.R.E 358 of 1903; 433 of 1903; 12 of 1905; 165 of 1906; 326 of 1906; 421 of 1912; 76 of 1914, 199 of 1915; 280 of 1917; 343 of 1917; 349 of 1918.

85. A R.E. 97 of 1932.

86. See T.A.S, VII, p. 10. The date of the inscription is not known. It is assignable to the 12th century A.D.

appeared prominently during the special celebrations and annual festivals. The Śucīndram pagoda, like most others of its kind, maintained its own permanent staff of musicians, vocal and instrumental. The extant records show that teachers of music and dancing, the Naṭṭuvans, as they were called, were employed by the authorities of the temple to instruct the Dēvadāsis in these arts.

Popular tradition is persistent that, at Śucīndram there flourished, about a hundred years ago, certain celebrated Aṇṇāvis or expert teachers of music. So great was their reputation that, they were honoured by the ruling sovereigns and were frequently invited for participation in musical concerts at the capital city. It is lamentable that all these arts, encouraged and patronized in the past by the temple, have suffered a set-back with the abolition of the Dēvadāsi system.

Patronage of Architecture and Sculpture: Finally, the construction of the temple and its numerous adjuncts is the epitome of the architectural and sculptural attainments of the bygone ages. Workers on stone, wood and metal have all found scope for the exercise of their arts in connection with the erection and embellishment of the temple. It is extremely doubtful whether artists like sculptors, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, painters and engravers would have promoted their respective arts in South India to the extent they did in the past, but for the encouragement provided by the temples.

The services rendered by the Maṭhas In respect of the patronage and dissemination of sacred literature, the part played by the maṭhas cannot be ignored. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha appears to have been the earliest one in Śucīndram. The Dharmapuram Maṭha, the Tiruvāḍuturai Maṭha, the Ayyā Maṭha, as well as the houses of the various Yōgakkār, were other prominent institutions in Śucīndram since the 17th century A.D. Besides being rest-houses for pilgrims and feeding houses for the poor, the maṭhas served also as centres of moral and spiritual instruction. Although inscriptions or other records about their history have not come down to us, information available from the rest of South India leaves us in no doubt as to the purpose and ideals of the Maṭhas.[87] On the whole, it is no exaggeration to say that the

87. See A.R.E 89 of 1921 for the earliest inscription so far known on the subject in South India. This Tirumēṟṟaḷi inscription of Dantivarman mentions a matha attached to the temple Regarding later mathas see A.R.E. 423 of 1904, 435 of 1906, 544 of 1911, 159 of 1925 and 276 of 1925, 111 of 1925 and 192 of 1929.

temple and the Matha were the two great gifts of the medieval Hinduism to Southern India

SECTION 7: THE TEMPLE—AN AGENT OF POOR RELIEF

The temple, and to a smaller extent the Mathas, have played an important part in the matter of charitable feeding True, the feeding of brahmins alone received the greatest attention in the past. Their intimate contact with the temples and religious observances, together with a traditional belief in the merit arising from feeding them, perhaps accounts for that peculiar circumstance. It is a remarkable feature in the history of South Indian temples that, from time immemorial, charitable endowments were frequently instituted for feeding poor brahmins. In fact, temples served in the days of old, as boarding houses for travellers, and provision was made by kings as well as by private individuals for feeding a specified number of brahmins after the offerings were made to the god.[88]

Several epigraphs of Śucīndram, ranging from the 9th to 16th century A.D., speak of the endowments made for this purpose. One of the earliest epigraphs, that of Māṟan Caḍayan's period, refers to the arrangement made for feeding brahmins. Following this, some of the inscriptions of the reigns of Cōlan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya, Rāja Rāja, and Cōḷa Pāṇdya Viceroys record endowments for the same object. The palm-leaf records of the temple and the documents of the Agastīśvaram Taluk mention similar endowments of more recent times.

That there existed a separate 'Akkiraśālai' in the temple as early as 1000 A.D., the 15th regnal year of Rāja Rāja, is significant. Endowments of the early Vēṇād kings like Kōda Kērala Varman, of the Medieval Pāṇḍyas like Parākrama Pāṇḍya and of later Travancore kings like Udaya Mārtāṇḍavarman in the 16th century and Bāla Mārtāṇḍavarman in the 18th century added to the increasing number of brahmins to be fed.

The Ūṭṭupura: The spasmodic charity of the earlier epochs was systematized by Bāla Mārtāṇḍa Varma through the organization of the Ūṭṭupura, the feeding house. Bāla Mārtāṇḍa Varma established several Ūṭṭupuras in various parts of Travancore.[89] The Pativu Kanakku of the year 994 M E. (1819 A D.) reveals that it was in 948 M E. (1772 A D.)

88 S I. I, Vol III, Part I, p. 3, T A S , III, p 47 and T.A S , II, p 175, lines 37 to 45

89 Shankunny Menon· "History of Travancore", p. 168

that the Ūṭṭupura at Śucīndram was established. In this feeding house, free food was offered to brahmins twice every day throughout the year. Bāla Mārtāṇḍa Varma, the maker of modern Travancore, evidently aimed at imitating the glorious traditions of the ancient Cēra kings. This kind of charity has always been one of the titles of the Cēra monarchs to fame, beginning from the days of Peruñcōṟṟudayāṉ of the Śangam age.[90]

When Col. Munro, the Resident-Dewan, ordered the assumption of the major temples and their property in 987 M.E. (1812 A.D.) the feeding in Ūṭṭupuras was not discontinued. On the other hand, there is evidence to show that, under his vigilant supervision, the administration of this item of charity was regularized, and that wastage and corruption were carefully checked. It was ordered that no one, whether a native of Śucīndram or an outsider, was to be fed for more than three days at a stretch.

Concerning the number of brahmins fed in the Ūṭṭupura at Śucīndram and the amount of money spent on this item, the Accounts of the temple furnish full details. The general trend during the period from 1772 A.D. to 1911 A.D. shows a gradual increase in the number of brahmins fed. The year 1862 A.D. was, however, exceptional; it records peak figures probably owing to the famine prevalent in that year. The figures of two representative years may be noted. The annual amount spent in connection with the Ūṭṭupura for the year 994 M.E. (1818-1819 A.D.) is specified as follows:—

Towards Paddy	..	23,108 Fanams
Funds allotted for other expenses connected with the feeding	..	24,159 „
Total	..	47,267 Fanams i.e., about Rs. 6,634

The total number of brahmins fed during that year was 73,724. Again, in the year 1017 M.E. (1841-42 A.D.), the total amount of money spent was Rs. 7812/- and the total number of brahmins fed in that year was 86,728.[91]

90. Peruñcōṟṟudayān Cēral Ādan, Neḍuñcēral Ādan alias Imayavaramban I, Celvakkaḍungōvāḻiya Ādan are all Śangam celebrities famous as patrons of brahmin feeding.

91. See also Lt. Horsley's Memoirs of Travancore, p. 11, for details concerning the brahmin feeding at Śucīndram

This organized system of 'brahmin feeding' was maintained in full vigour till 1st Āvaṇi 1087 M.E. (August 1911 A.D.), when it was partially discontinued as a measure of retrenchment. Thereafter, the Gōsāyis, a class of North Indian pilgrims were given a fixed quantity of rice per head; and a limited number of other bonafide pilgrims was fed by the temple authorities. It was on 1st Āvaṇi 1098 M.E. (August 1922) that, with the organization of a separate Dēvasvam Department, the Ūṭṭupura was completely closed.

However, even at present, there continues the feeding of a fixed number of brahmins in the temple at the termination of certain pūjās. Early in the morning, the Uṣa Pūjā is followed by the Uṣa Namaskāram at about 7 a.m. when 18 brahmins are fed.[92] At about 9 a.m. takes place the Mṛṣṭānnam feeding of 12 brahmins. The Mṛṣṭānnam is, as the word itself suggests, feasting of a high order.[93] Then at about 12 noon, following the Ucca Pūjā, occurs the Ucca Namaskāram or the feeding of 18 brahmins. In the evening, after the Attāḻapūjā, there occurs the feeding of 4 brahmins. Thus, every day at least 52 brahmins are entitled to have their food in the temple. Oftentimes, the poor brahmins of the village itself partake of this charitable feeding; sometimes, brahmins from the neighbouring villages, and occasionally pilgrims from distant places benefit by these.

Besides these items which figure every day, there are the special feasts for brahmins on sacred occasions like Śrī Jayanti, Cittirai Viṣu, the Tirukkalyāṇam, the birthdays of the Mahārājas of Travancore, and above all the ten days of the Mahōtsavās. Undoubtedly, large numbers of brahmins from the neighbouring places partake of the feasts on these ceremonious occasions.

Poor feeding — other castes : But it is wrong to think that brahmins alone have the benefit of the charitable feeding. A feast is held for the Savarṇa non-brahmins also, on the day of the Car Festival. Further, poor-feeding in the form of gruel, takes place in Śucīndram on the day of the Dhvajārōhaṇa. However, by far the most substantial help for the poor people of the locality and of the neighbourhood is derived from

92. Namaskāram signified prostration. Since the brahmins who are fed are expected to prostrate before the deity to the accompaniment of the chanting of mantras, the feeding itself is called 'Namaskāram'.

93. Besides ten side dishes or curries, three varieties of sweet puddings (pāyasams) also are served. The Accounts show that in connection with the preparation of this feed, 6 chuckrams or about 3½ annas per head, excluding rice, have been allotted

the vast quantity of cooked rice offered as neivēdyam and eventually distributed among the large number of employees of the pagoda. The total quantity used for this purpose is no less than 4½ Kōṭṭās of rice per day, and it is important to note that over 90% of this cooked food is sold to the public at a cheap price. On an average, well over 600 persons subsist upon this food alone. Thus, this has proved to be an unostentatious, but nevertheless, a substantial institution of public charity.

The consideration of the charitable feeding, which the temple affords, will not be complete without the mention of the free feeding which takes place on specific occasions in the neighbouring villages. They are held in connection with certain ceremonies in the Śucīndram temple.

In the prosperous village of Tērūr, about a mile to the north of Śucīndram, public feeding is provided on several occasions associated with the Utsavas in the temple. In Tekkūr, the southern section of Tērūr, on all the ten days of the Cittirai and Mārkaḻi Utsavas, rice-gruel is offered to all and sundry. It is interesting to observe that the expenses connected with this item of charity are met from the common village fund.

Moreover, in Tērūr, on the 8th day of the Utsava in Śucīndram, a feast is held for brahmins and others in what is called the Nīrāhāra Maṭha. By reason of the feast offered on the 8th day of the Utsava, the maṭha itself is otherwise known as 'Eṭṭāmtirunāl Maṭham'. Besides this, there is the 'Tiruvātirai Maṭha' in Tērūr where, on the day of Tērōṭṭam or Car Festival at Śucīndram, public feeding takes place Expenses connected with these items of charity are met from property endowed by pious individuals in the past.

In the hamlet of Akkarai, situated within a furlong of Śucīndram, rice-gruel is supplied to the poor on the day of the Car Festival. An exactly similar item figures in the village of Dēvarkuḷam to the north-east of Tērūr. The expenses for this feeding in both of these villages are met by the Government from 987 M.E. (1811 A.D.) onwards. Formerly, they were provided by the authorities of the Śucīndram temple.

In Śucīndram itself, during the period of the Utsavas, the Maṭhas like the Tiruvāḍuturai, Dharmapuram, Vaṭṭappaḷḷi and Ayyā Mathas offer food to pilgrims and devotees. A temple record, dated 13th Puraṭṭāśi 1002 M.E. (1826 A.D.), refers to endowments of land by private individuals for the supply of buttermilk and *pānakkam* (sweet beverage),

as also for feeding 63 pilgrims during the period of the Utsavas. The Ayyā Maṭha provides a feast for 18 brahmins on every Dvādaśi day. The endowment to meet this charge has been made in 974 M.E. by Saumi Nārāyaṇappayya, the founder of the Maṭha. On the whole, the temple, directly and otherwise, has been a valuable centre of poor relief.

People employed for the supply of goods and services. As an employer, providing work and the means of livelihood for a large number of persons, the temple influenced in a great measure the economic life of the people. From the beginning, the temple needed the services of the priest, the garland-maker and suppliers of milk, of ghee, of oil etc. With the development of the temple and the growth in its wealth, the requirements increased. The authorities of the temple entered into contracts with individuals or groups who undertook to supply specified goods and services at stated periods. Ghee for burning lamps, the number of which increased vastly with the evergrowing endowments of devotees, flowers and garlands, rice for offerings and feeding brahmins, vegetables and fruits, sandal-paste and incense were all furnished in accordance with fixed agreements. Sureties were demanded, and severe penalties were enforced on defaulters.

Most of the persons rendering particular services were part-time employees. But, sometime before the 15th century A.D., there arose a new method of contract. A fixed plot of land was settled on the person who had to render the specified service, in return for which the produce of the land was allowed to be used.[94] This type of contract known as Kārāṇmai was evidently instituted in order to create a permanent interest on the part of the employees.

No inscription furnishes a full list of the employees. So far, the earliest available list is found in the Account of 916 M.E. (1741 A.D.), which includes almost every one engaged in the service of the pagoda. Singers and dancers, pipers and drummers, conch blowers, buglers, lamplighters, gardeners and garland makers, parasol bearers, sweepers, jewel-stitchers and tailors, potters, washermen, barbers, carpenters, astrologers, chorists, accountants, priests and purohits — all together, constitute a huge array of temple servants. Most of them continue to be in the service of the pagoda at present.

94. This appears to have been the principal system in vogue in the rest of South India, too. Compare, for example, A.R.E. 393 of 1915; 929 of 1919 and particularly S.I.I., Vol. II, No. 66.

Artisans: The temple was a brisk centre of industrial activity. Several small industries and handicrafts were patronized by the temple. Often, persons skilled in particular arts, the products of which were in demand at the pagoda, were invited and settled in or about the place, under suitable terms. That a family of tailors was settled at the place before 31st Āvaṇi 1032 M.E. (1856 A.D.) is learnt from the temple record bearing that date. Again, that a family of goldsmiths was engaged in the temple-service, on the basis of Kārāṇmai contract, long before 992 M.E. (1817 A.D.), is seen from another record of 5th Paṅguni 992 M.E. Śilpis or engravers on stone lived permanently in the village even before the 12th century A.D.

Weavers and Dyers: Several families of weavers and dyers have been living in Paṛakkai, Iḍalākkuḍy and Kōṭṭāṟ. In fact, the Kaikkōlar in Kōṭṭār and the Śāyakkār in Iḍalākkuḍy became famous in the arts of weaving and dying. It does not seem improbable that, at some early date, they were established there, in order to serve the needs of Śucīndram. Epigraphs at Mānampādi and Perunagar[95] register the attractive terms held out to weavers in order to settle down in the villages where rich temples flourished. Nearer Śucīndram, at the village of Bhūtappāṇdy, the seat of the celebrated temple founded by Bhūtappāṇḍya of Śangam fame, Cāliyars (weavers) were established by the temple authorities who extended protection to them even against rapacious royal officers.[96]

Craftsmen: Several craftsmen are needed for the decoration of particular shrines and maṇḍapas in connection with the daily ceremonies, and more particularly, with the Utsavas. Masons, carpenters, sculptors, painters as well as gold, silver, and blacksmiths were some of the permanent employees of the pagoda. When any specific construction or repair had to be undertaken, experts from far and near were employed.

Ūḻiyam: One type of service, expected of the citizens, which was not remunerated, but was considered obligatory, is interesting. This is called Ūḻiyam, which denoted personal gratuitous service. In connection with the Car Festival, it was incumbent upon all the citizens of Nāñcināḍ to render assistance in dragging the cars. Besides, when any huge construction had to be undertaken, it was possible for the authorities of the temple to command gratuitous service. One of the records

95. A.R.E. 381 of 1923 and 368 of 1923 respectively.
96. T.A.S., VII, pp. 93-94

incorporated in the 'Mudaliyār Manuscripts'[97] reveals that the Piḍāgaikkār of Nāñcināḍ were called upon to help the conveyance of stone beams by co-operative effort. It is surprising to learn that fines were imposed on those who had failed to respond to this call of duty. This type of service indicates the great respect that the citizens of Nāñcināḍ had for the temple; besides, it shows the corporate spirit that was expected among the people. Rev. Mateer betrays lack of sympathy and understanding when he roundly characterizes the 'Ūḻiyam' or gratuitous service prevalent in Travancore, as "an institution common in countries that are backward in civilization."[98] This service was not forced labour; it was rendered, for the most part, with willingness and enthusiasm.

SECTION 9 THE TEMPLE AND DĒVADĀSIS

The term Dēvadāsis: The dēvadāsis form a unique class of employees in the temples of South India. The pagoda at Śucīndram also had its complement of these servants. Dēvadāsis, as the designation implies, were those dedicated to the service of the Dēva or deity of the temple. In the bygone ages, they were esteemed as the chosen servants of God, and were known also as Dēvaraḍiyār. Perhaps the commonly used term 'Tēvaḍiyāḷ' is a corruption of the latter appellation. But '*Tēvu*' itself means God,[99] and hence, even originally the popular term, without any sting, might have been employed as an alternative designation of the class.

However, it need hardly be added that, as a consequence of the degeneration that set in among them in later days, the name, 'Tēvaḍiyāḷ', has acquired a disreputable association. The term 'Kuḍikkāri', another alternative name for 'Dēvadāsi', originally signified only the member of the Kuḍi or a part of the village settlement. This appellation resembles that of 'taḷiccērippendugal' occurring in South Indian inscriptions.[100] The epigraphic records of South Indian Temples indicate that Dēvadāsis were known by some other names, too. They were called as

97. Manuscript: No. 53.
98. Rev. Samuel Mateer: 'Native Life in Travancore', p. 293.
99. See Tamil Lexicon, Vol. IV, p. 2069.
100. The expression, 'taḷiccērippendugal', is translated as 'women who reside in the streets near the temple'. In Śucīndram, as in other sacred villages of South India, the houses of Dēvadāsis were located in the streets running around the pagoda. The suggestion that 'Kuḍikkāri' is derived from 'Kudi' meaning a tenant and that, consequently, it applies to this class of tenants appears to be wide of the mark.

'Māṇikkattār',[101] and also as 'Kaṇikaiyār'.[102] In an inscription of Mārambavaiyār, they were called 'Aḍigaḷmār'.[103] The women attached to Śiva temples were also known as 'Rudra-gaṇikās'.[104]

The rise of Dēvadāsis in Sucīndram, the role they played in the service of the temple, the change that came upon their status and the circumstances which led to the termination of the Dēvadāsi system in this temple and in the rest of Travancore, are all details well worth an intensive study. Epigraphs as well as the palm-leaf documents in Sucīndram and local tradition furnish us with some data; but, they do not take us far, and have to be supplemented by facts known about the Dēvadāsi system of other South Indian temples.

Origin of the Dēvadāsi System : So far as inscriptions go, the earliest mention of a Dēvadāsi in Sucīndram is found only in the epigraph of 432 M.E. (1257 A.D.). But that does not warrant the conclusion that the system did not exist before that date. In fact, this appears to be a striking example of negative evidence, demanding the utmost caution in its interpretation. Reference to a Dēvadāsi is found in a record of the neighbouring temple of Cōḷapuram in 428 M.E. (1253 A.D.).[105] Moreover, as early as 1040 A.D. a Dēvadāsi of Guhanāthasvāmin temple at Kanyākumari is stated to have made an endowment to that shrine.[106]

The rise of the Dēvadāsi system in South India may be dated to a period not later than the 8th century A.D. Probably this unique class of temple servants emerged about the time when many South Indian temples were built or re-constructed on a grand scale. One of the important epigraphic references to this group as part of the temple-establishment comes from the celebrated pagoda of Rāja Rāja at Tanjāvūr. It reveals that in 1004 A.D. the Bṛhadīśvara temple had attracted to it no less than 400 taliccērippeṇḍugaḷ (dēvadāsis). The fact that so many members of this group were transferred from other temples of the Cōḷa country shows that Rāja Rāja was not the innovator of the system. The inscription of Dharmamahādēvī (the queen of Nandivarman Pallava Malla) in the Muktēśvara Shrine at Kāñci speaks of fourty four 'Kūttigaḷ' among the Taḷipparivāram or 'Temple-establishment'. This in-

101 A.R.E. 278 of 1902.

102 A.R.E. 302 of 1902.

103. A.R.E. 303 of 1901.

104 The famous Paravaiyār, wife of Sundaramūrti Nāyanār, was a member of the 'Rudraganika' family.

105 T.A.S., VI, pp. 24-25

106. Idem. I, p. 240

scription is clearly ascribable to the 8th century A.D., and thus, it affords a definite proof that, in or before the 8th century, Dēvadāsis were associated with South Indian temples.

It is true that, classical Tamil Literature of the Śangam Age abounds in reference to Dāsis or courtesans. Both Cilappadikāram and Manimēkhalai bear ample testimony to the existence of this class. A question may arise whether, as early as the period of these epics, dāsis were enlisted in the formal service of the temple. A definite answer cannot be given in the present state of our knowledge. The safest conclusion is that, as members of the temple staff, the Dāsis were set up at some date in or before the 8th century A.D.[107]

Śucīndram was actively connected with the rest of Tamil Nāḍ, during the Pāndya and Cōḷa epochs of supremacy. And, in the organization of the temple, there arose a marked similarity with that in the East Coast. Hence, it may not be far wrong to hold that fairly early in the history of the temple, perhaps not later than Rāja Rāja's reign, the Dēvadāsi system must have found its way into Śucīndram. But, it is not easy to determine whether the Dāsis at Śucīndram belonged to the same class as their compeers in the Pāṇdya and Cōḷa countries or to the group of Nāirs called the Tamil Pādam or Pādamaṅgalam, who formed the Dēvadāsis in the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum.

N. Subrahmania Aiyar, in his Census Report of 1901, states that the Dēvadāsis of South Travancore, evidently including those of Śucīndram, adopted into their fold, girls of the Tamil Pādam or Pādamaṅgalam section of Nāirs. Nagamiah supports this view.[108] But, from the description of the distinct customs of the Nāir Dāsis and the Tamil Dāsis given by the same writer,[109] one is inclined to identify the Śucīndram Dāsis with the Tamil group.

True, some Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram, like Nāirs, dressed themselves in white cloth and wore the tōdu, the distinctive ear ornament of the

107. Kālidāsa's 'Mrccagadika' refers to Dēvadāsis. Thus it was adopted in parts of India even before the 5th century A.D. Yule points out (Marco Polo· Travels, II, p 351, note 19) that the institution of the temple dancing girls flourished in ancient Corinth under the name of *lepo dovroi,* which is very nearly a translation of the Hindu name of 'Dēvadāsi'. However, it seems far too fantastic to suggest any connection between the Greek and the Indian institutions.

108. He says in his State Manual, Vol II, p. 383· "Those attached to the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum are drawn from the Pādamangalam caste of the Śūdras and this subdivision also supplies the temple servants in the Agastīśvaram Taluk".

109. Ibid p. 384.

Malayāḷi women (a circular pendant of gold, about four or five times as big as the ordinary kammal of the Tamiḷians). Moreover, like the Malayāḷi Dāsis, the Śucīndram sect did not accept engagements for singing and dancing in private houses. But, as against the similarity of these features must be noticed the facts that those at Śucīndram adopted the system of 'getting wedded' to the deity after the East Coast fashion, a practice not at all common among the Malayāḷi Dāsis. Further, the manners, customs, and language of the Dāsis at Śucīndram are distinctly Tamiḷian. Above all, from early times, the Dēvadāsi at Śucīndram was expected to play an important role in connection with the Mahōtsavas, for which skill in dancing as well as in singing hymns from Tiruvācagam was needed. On the eighth day of the Utsava, a dance of a high order had to be enacted, to the accompaniment of vocal music. Again, in connection with the powdering of the gold dust prior to the Āṟāṭ (See Chapter VIII), the Dēvadāsi had to sing along with the Ōtuvār, a hymn from Tiruvācagam. On the other hand, as Nagamiah states, " the Malayāli Dāsi has neither to sing nor to dance ". He adds that " she does not lead processions unless they are confined to the premises of the temple ". Since skill in these arts was demanded of the Dēvadāsi at Śucīndram, it is more than probable that the group was introduced from Tamiḻ Nāḍ at the outset.

The names of Dēvadāsis, occurring in the early epigraphs of Śucīndram and of the neighbouring temples, seem to confirm the above conclusion. 'Kaṇḍan Cōlai' in the Kanyākumari inscription of 1040 A.D., 'Ceṅgōḍan Pūvāṇḍi' and Vadugan Kuṇavan's sister, Kōmalavalli, in the Cōḷapuram inscriptions of 1253 A.D., Kunṟāṇḍi Tiruvāṇḍi and Ārumukhapperumāḷ Perumāḷ Rāyar, occurring in the Śucīndram inscriptions of 1275 A.D. and 1489 A.D. respectively, are, beyond doubt, Tamiḷian names.

Another piece of evidence, circumstantial though it be, supports this view. The fact that, so early as 1040 A.D., Dēvadāsis were attached to the temple at Kanyākumari, suggests that in Śucīndram, too, the institution existed about that time. At that period, the association of neither the Malayāḷi kings nor of the Nambūdiri priests with Śucīndram had commenced. All these circumstances seem to leave no room for doubt that, to start with, the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram were Tamiḷian, exactly similar to those in the East Coast.

When there was frequent political contact of the Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa powers with Śucīndram, the institution was probably imported from

those regions. We have seen that by the time of Rāja Rāja the system had become rooted in the temples of Tamil Nāḍ. He himself stabilized the order on a permanent basis in his illustrious temple at Tañjāvūr. It is likely that this 'prince among organizers of temple management', introduced the institution into Śucīndram, too.

The presence of the mixed characteristics of both the Malayāli and the Tamil groups among the Śucīndram Dāsis is easily explained. After the Malayāḷi brahmins entered the arena of Śucīndram and eventually dominated the śānti, tantram and management of the temple, they would have imported some Dēvadāsis of the Nāir group. Clear evidence from the temple records is to hand that, after the Government of Travancore assumed control over the pagoda in 1811 A.D, there was a free recruitment to the Dēvadāsi group in Śucīndram from the Pādamaṅgalam section of Nāirs. But Śucīndram is situated in the midst of the Tamilians, and naturally, their language and customs were absorbed by the Malayāḷi section also. The result is that we have at present a composite group; and, with the cessation of fresh recruitment, it bids fair to be completely acclimatized to the Tamil environment.

The enrolment of Dēvadāsis :—From the 17th century A.D. and perhaps earlier still, quite an elaborate ceremony was gone through before a girl was admitted to the official rank of Dēvadāsi of the pagoda. Certain rules and conventions had become established in connection with the ceremony of initiation.[110]

The girl to be admitted to the rank of Dēvadāsis should not have attained puberty. Invariably the dedication took place soon after her sixth or ninth year of age. The procedure began with the senior Dēvadāsi of the First Kuḍi presenting the girl applicant to the Yōgakkār. The application took the form of a request for being enrolled as one of the Dēvadāsis and granted a *Kuḍi* and *Paḍi,* i.e., a house and the allowance for the temple service. On receiving the application, the Yōgakkār took into consideration the number of girls who could be admitted during the particular year, as also the status of the applicant's family and approved or rejected the application on the basis of the findings. If the Yōgakkār approved of an application, a document was executed with them by the mother or the nearest kins-woman of the girl, and this was considered as the 'Jātaka' ceremony.

110. The details of the procedure are learnt from a palm-leaf record at the hands of the Vattappalli Maṭha.

Then followed on an appointed day the celebration of the 'tālikeṭṭu' or marriage of the girl with the deity. At an auspicious time of the day, fixed by the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar, the Yōgakkār assembled in the temple. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar also was present there to look after the arrangements. Subsequent to 906 M.E., (1731 A.D.), when the Valiya Śrīkāryakkār was appointed by the Government, he too, used to be present on the occasion. In the meanwhile, the relatives of the girl took her in a gay procession to the temple. A brass plate, containing two new clothes, betel, arecanut, turmeric, kuṁkum and a tāli (marriage symbol) made of gold was carried by a woman member of the party. Pipers and drummers were in attendance.

The Mēlśānti Nambūdiri, on duty for the day at Vaḍakkēḍam, received the plate of articles and placed the clothes and the tāli at the feet of the god. The Nambūdiri then officiated as the high priest of the "marriage" of the girl with the deity. The girl was asked to take her seat in the inner sanctuary facing the deity and all the ceremonies of an orthodox Hindu marriage were punctiliously gone through. Finally, the priest, officiating on behalf of the deity, tied the tāli round the girl's neck. The 'tālikeṭṭu' ceremony over, the Nambūdiri imparted the Pañcākṣara hymn to the bride. The girl devoutly prostrated, first before the deity, and then before the priest. On the girl coming out of the inner sanctuary, a formal initiation into the art of dancing was carried out by the chief Naṭṭuvan, the instructor. For two or three days, the social celebrations of marriage, like feasting and merriment, took place in the house of the bride. The Yōgakkār offered presents of money, suited to the status of the bride's family.

The subdivisions among the Dēvadāsis :— The record of 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D.) shows that long before 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram were graded into 32 Kuḍis or houses. Of these, Kuḍis 1 to 16 were known as belonging to Ciṟappukkuḍi or Mēlilaṅgam, and Kudis 17 to 32 to Murakkuḍi or Kīḻilaṅgam. The members of the Muṟakkuḍi were to attend to the daily routine work only, while those of Cirappukkuḍi, occupying a higher rank, were particularly on service during festive occasions, in addition to their light routine work.

Within the Ciṟappukkuḍi again, there were gradations. Of the members of Ciṟappukkudi, numbers 1 to 12 were held to be of a still higher order than those from 13 to 16. It was held that the members of the 1st Kuḍi alone were entitled to sing and dance in front of the principal deity, the others being relegated to comparatively less import-

ant work. Proficiency in singing and dancing was apparently the original basis of distinction, but, soon it led to the development of hereditary subgroups among the Dēvadāsis.

It is not known when the classification of the Dēvadāsis into Ciṟappu and Murakkuḍi was first introduced. Doubtless, it appeared before 665 M.E. (1490 A.D.), for an inscription of this date speaks of "Dēvaraḍiyāril Cirappu Mudal Kottu Āṟumukhapperumāl Perumāḷ Rāyar". The earlier epigraphs do not bear any trace of the distinction. For instance, the inscription of 432 M.E. (1257 A.D.) refers to the Dēvadāsi, merely as 'Ivvūr dēvaraḍiyāḷ Kunṟāṇḍi Tiruvāṇḍi'. An inference is possible that the bifurcation of the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram into Ciṟappukkuḍi and Muṟakkuḍi appeared sometime between 1257 and 1491 A.D.

The members of the 32 Kuḍis were also subjected to another classification. There were (1) the Āḍumpātram i.e., those who were engaged in dancing and singing (2) those attached to the Nāṭakaśāla i.e., those engaged in dance, music and acting in the Nāṭakaśāla at the outer entrance of the temple and (3) the Tōḍuvaccavar, i.e., those who had retired from active service but were still attached to the temple, doing odd pieces of work. They were described also as Tāikkiḻavikaḷ.

It is interesting to learn from the record of 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D.) that, among these different classes, there were the undermentioned number of members:—

(1)	Āḍumpātraṅgaḷ ..	37
(2)	Nāṭakaśālayil pārkumavar (those attached to the Nāṭakaśāla) .	7
(3)	Tōḍuvaccavar (those retired from active service) ..	28
		72

Duties assigned to the Dēvadāsis:—The different items of service which the Dēvadāsis were to discharge in the temple are found specified in the record of 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D.).[111] The duties described, may be summarised as follows:

111. That document definitely states that the details are those observed before 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.) It is, therefore, obvious that the assignment of the specific functions had come into force prior to 1819 A.D. The services rendered by the Śucīndram group were, more or less, similar to those allotted to the Dēvadāsis of other South Indian temples. See A.R.E. 248 of 1906, 274 of 1910; 122 of 1912 and 578 of 1916.

(1) They sweep and cleanse the Śrībalipura and the court-yard every day. They clean these portions of the pagoda by smearing them with cowdung and water every Tuesday and Friday.

(2) Every morning, about the time of the Dīpārādhana, the 'āḍumpātrams' perform a dance recital in front of Vaḍakkēḍam. While this is in progress, other Dēvadāsis are engaged in a chorus of Kuravai i.e., a babel of shrill musical sound by the wagging of the tongue.

(3) They bear lamps in front of Vaḍakkēḍam, Tekkēḍam and the shrines of the first prākāra on the occasions of the evening Dīpārādhana.

(4) They accompany the Śrībali procession carrying lamps in connection with the first two rounds of the Attāḻa Śrībali.

(5) From the commencement of the evening Dīpārādhana till the night Śrībali procession, a group of Dēvadāsis performs a dance in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. They continue the dance in front of the Śrībali procession during the three rounds of the Attāḻa Śrībali.

(6) The old 'Taikkiḻavikaḷ' carry the lamps known as 'Pāṇi Viḷakku'[112] behind the Śrībali procession.

(7) After the Śrībali images are taken back to the respective shrines, some members do the singing of lullaby in front of Vaḍakkēḍam and of aṣṭabadi[113] in front of Tekkēḍam.

(8) Every morning about 4 a.m., when the Paḷḷiyuṇartal or the rousing of the god from sleep takes place, one of the Dēvadāsis, the turn being fixed previously, stands in front of Vaḍakkēḍam and another in front of Tekkēḍam. Commencing from that time, down to the termination of the Attāḻapūjā, the two members station themselves in the places indicated above.

(9) Soon after the feeding of brahmins in connection with Namaskāram, Mṛṣṭānnam and the offer of 'Pālpāyasam' some members clean the first prākāra.

(10) Soon after the Śrībali processions in the morning, noon and night, they remove the flowers and rice found at different places in the Śrībalipura and clean the spots.

(11) They get the pitcher used for fetching pure water for the pūjā, as well as the pūjā vessels from the respective shrines before every pūjā, and after cleaning them properly, place them at the doorway.

112 'Pāni Vilakku' is a brass lamp with a long handle by which it is held by the lamp-bearer.

113. Aṣṭapadi is a recitation in praise of Visnu

Also, after the oblations are offered at noon, they wash the gold and silver plates on which Mṛṣṭānnam is served, and return them promptly to the śāntikkār.

(12) By turns, eight dāsis per day engage themselves in dancing in front of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam during the evening dīpārādhana. In connection with the third circumambulation of the Śrībali, these eight Dāsis join the procession singing, accompanied by the clap of hands to the beat of time.

(13) On the occasions of the street processions of the Utsavas during day time, the Dāsis fan the image with chāmarās When the processions start at night and early morning, they dance in front of the vāhanas at the entrance to the Nāṭakaśāla.

(14) Since the Dāsis in active service have enormous work in connection with the Utsavas, like participation in the street processions, Śrībali, etc., during the Utsava period, the Tōḍuvaccavar attend to the sweeping and cleaning of the various parts of the temple.

Local tradition associates with the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram a few more responsibilities besides those mentioned in the record of 1042 M.E. For instance, when the ruling sovereign or members of the royal family visited the temple, the Dēvadāsis were to participate in their reception and were to be in attendance on them during their entire period of stay.

Again, the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram, along with those attached to other important temples of South Travancore, were obliged to proceed to Trivandrum, the capital of the State, for participation in the ceremony of Mahānavami. During the ten days of the festival, they were to sing and dance by allotted turns.[114] Further, in connection with the annual Utsavas in the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmy temple at Trivandrum, a specified number of Dēvadāsis was sent from Śucīndram. Then, too, they had to sing and dance on specified days.

Remuneration :—During the early period of the Dēvadāsi system in Śucīndram, each member was allotted a grant of land by a Kārāṇmai deed.[115] In addition, each of the Dēvadāsis was given every day, a share of the cooked rice offered to the deity. Houses or Kuḍis near the temple were allotted to them for their residence.

114. This is identical with the practice in Vijayanagar in the palmy days of the Empire. See p. 262 of Sewell's "Forgotten Empire" and p. 405 of "History of the Third Dynasty" by N. Venkataramanayya.

115. See for examples of similar arrangements in other temples, A R E. 59 of 1923 and 95 of 1926

The share in the cooked rice that the various groups of Kuḍikkāṛi received, was enhanced with the increase in the income of the temple. The amount of rice, or rather, the number of kaṭṭis (blocks of rice) that they were entitled to receive in recent times, are found specified in the records of 994 M.E. (1819 A.D.). The āḍumpātrams or the actual dancers and singers were allotted two blocks of rice and the tāikkiḻavis 1½ blocks, while the Rāyars were given three each. The 72 Dēvadāsis, belonging to the different grades, were assigned a total number of 144 blocks of rice.[116] In addition to this, the eight dāsis, chosen in turns to be on duty in the temple throughout the day, were together allotted 23 blocks of rice, at the rate of three per head. Further, for attendance in the temple at services like dhāra, tirumañjanam, tirupaḷḷiyeḻucci, śankālabhiṣēkham, etc., a total of 196 and 1/8 blocks of rice were allotted to the entire body of āḍumpātrams. During the period of the Utsavas, additional grants of cooked rice were made.

For service in connection with the Āvaṇi Utsava, the Dēvadāsis were together allotted 172 blocks of rice; for the Mārkaḻi and Cittirai Utsavas, besides ½ a block per head, a total of 267½ and 317½ blocks respectively, and for the Māśi Tirukkalyāṇa festival 116½ blocks were given. Also, in the month of Āvaṇi, an annual monetary remuneration was allotted as follows. The āḍumpātrams, and those attached to the Nāṭakaśāla were given 7 fanams each, the tāikkiḻavis at the rate of 6 fanams, the girls who had not attained puberty 5 fanams each, and the Rāyars at the rate of 9 fanams. The total amounted only to the sum of 506 fanams. (Rs. 71). Obviously the monetary remuneration was nominal.

Tōḍuvaccavar :—A record dated 13th Kārtikai 997 M.E. (1822 A.D.) furnishes details of the interesting ceremony connected with the retirement of a Dēvadāsi from active service. When, on account of advanced age, or chronic illness, a Dēvadāsi wishes to get relieved of her principal duties, she submits a formal petition to that effect to the authorities of the temple. At a specified date and time, the Yōgakkār assemble in the temple and the applicant appears before them. She takes her seat on a plank facing them, unhooks her ear-pendants and lays them before the authorities. Evidently, the tōḍu is considered as the 'insignia of her office' as a temple dancer. The tōḍu is believed to be an ornament

116. It is interesting to learn that 144 blocks of rice were made out of rice measuring 16 marakkāl and 7 nāḻis; thus each block was roughly made of 15/16 nāḻi of rice.

of youth. The ceremony of the removal of the pendants really marks the retirement from active service.

Along with the unhooked pendants, the tāikkiḻavi, the 'fallen angel', also places before the authorities a gift of 12 fanams. Though the pendants are returned to her afterwards, never more does she wear them. After her discharge from the formal service of the temple, she wears the pāmpaḍam, the typical ear-ornament of the Tamiḻ non-brahmin community until practically the beginning of the twentieth century. Interesting indeed is the admixture of the Malayāḻi and the Tamiḻian customs represented in the two varieties of ear ornaments of the Dēvadāsi, worn during her period of service, and thereafter.

Social position of the Dēvadāsis :—The degeneration that affected the Dāsis in Śucīndram, as in the rest of South India, has received elaborate notice at the hands of historians and publicists. The accounts of foreigners, especially of visitors to Vijayanagar, have presented a rather overdrawn picture of the debased standards of their morality. Vice gets greater publicity than virtue; and in the midst of the lurid descriptions of Nuniz and Abdur Razak, one is inclined to forget the high position held by the Dēvadāsis in the past.

There is no doubt that, to start with, the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram, as of the rest of South India, were animated by a high spirit of service and devotion. Tradition has it that in the distant past, rich and respectable people occasionally dedicated their daughters to join the service of the temple. This was done in pursuance of a vow to the effect, that, as a mark of gratitude for the birth of a long-wished-for child or cure of a mortal disease, a daughter would be presented to the temple service.[117] Many of the Dēvadāsis were rich even at the time of their entry into the order.

Some of the Śucīndram inscriptions reveal that the Dēvadāsis were entrusted with money or property to fulfil the conditions of certain endowments to the temple. It is significant that they figure in connection with very rich benefactions, especially those bestowed by kings, queens and other high personages. The inscription of 432 M.E. (1257

117. See A.R.E. 1911 Part II, para 66 and Nelson's "The Madura Country", Party II, p. 79. The suggestion of Mr. P. Thomas (Epics, Myths and Legends of India, pp. 72 ff.) that the Dēvadāsi system was an institution of sex-worship is, to say the least, unwarranted and unhistorical, with reference to the early position of the Dēvadāsis. See also A.R.E. 1922 Part II para 19. The Epigraphist states that ladies were dedicated for spiritual life of divine service, and that the Dēvaradiyār had not degenerated into the immoral level of later days.

A.D.) records a generous gift of 200 accu by Cokkattāṇḍāḷ, the queen of Vīra Pāṇdya, and this amount was entrusted to Kunṟāṇḍi Tiruvāṇḍi, the Dēvaraḍiyāḷ of Śucīndram, for providing articles for certain offerings. Again, an epigraph of 1490 A.D. registers the gift of land by Vīra Ravi Varma, the king of Vēnāḍ, in favour of Perumāl Rāyar of the highest rank for the discharge of a similar responsibility. These indicate that, there were Dēvadāsis who enjoyed a high standing and were considered worthy of trust.

It is remarkable that kings conferred titles of honour on talented Dēvadāsis in recognition of their high attainments in singing and dancing. Besides the inscription of 1490 A.D. itself, some of the palm-leaf records speak of the conferment of the same title on others The title, Rāyar, etymologically means king or ruler, evidently indicative of the high rank she occupied among Dēvadāsis. This title was conferred on a Śucīndram Dāsi in 1874 A.D. for the last time. It is surprising how the title, Rāyar, a distinctly Telugu term cropped up in the distant south. The royal dancing girls of Vijayanagar were, at times called "Rāyapātram".[118] Doubtless, even before the political contact of Vijayanagar with Nāñcināḍ commenced, the title was adopted in Śucīndram. This shows how social ideas and practices spread in South India independent of political contact.

The Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram themselves have made endowments to the temple. They are also credited with the construction of certain parts of the pagoda such as the Vasanta Maṇḍapa and the Nāṭakaśāla. The sincere devotion of certain Dēvadāsis has earned for them well-merited fame.

Despite all this, it is idle to ignore or gloss over the demoralization that invaded the ranks of the Dēvadāsis in course of time. That the Dēvadāsis of the 15th and 16th century in Vijayanagar were indulging in the unholy trade of prostitution is described at length by several foreign travellers. What was true of Vijayanagar was likely to have been true of the rest of South India. At Śucīndram, tradition has it that several rich men of the neighbouring villages maintained Dēvaraḍiyār as consorts.

The male members belonging to the Dēvadāsi caste, have been, for ages, connected with the temple in various capacities. Beginning from

118. Maṅgāyi a royal dancing girl is described as "Rāyapātra Cūdāmani"—See Dr. Saletore · "Social and Political Life in Vijayanagar" Vol. II, p. 409.

manual work, up to that of the instruction in the fine arts of music and dance for the girls attached to the pagoda, all odd jobs formed their monopoly. Thus they, too, had their place in the temple establishment. But, in comparison with their brethren in the East Coast, these men have rarely won outstanding distinction as connoiseurs of fine arts.

Notwithstanding the conferment of the title of Rāyar on certain Śucīndram Dēvadāsis in appreciation of their skill in music and dance, the level attained by them does not appear to have been very high. This is perhaps due to the fact that, unlike in the East Coast, the Dēvadāsis of Śucīndram did not accept engagements for dance or music in private houses and, therefore, did not have scope for developing these arts in a competitive spirit.[119]

The Dēvadāsi system is now a thing of the past in the temples of Travancore. It was increasingly felt that the class was a stain on Hindu society and religion. This canker was wisely removed by the epoch-making law passed in 1930 during the Regency of H. H. Sētu Bāi, the Senior Rāṇi. Even in 1921, the Government decided to prohibit further recruitment to the class of Kuḍikkāṛis either by adoption or by voluntary contract. It was also laid down that men were to be substituted in place of Kuḍikkāṛis whenever vacancies arose. The adoption of this course was motivated by the hope that the institution of Dēvadāsis would die away in course of time. But it would have needed many years for the system to become extinct. Hence a decisive step was taken by the Government in 1930, when they ordered its complete discontinuance, as in the opinion of the Government " this undesirable institution has outlived its time ". In order to avoid economic hardship to the Dēvadāsis thrown out of temple service, a monthly allowance of Rs. 9/- per head, together with a share of the food offered to the deity, was granted.

Now, there is a feverish effort on the part of the Dēvadāsis in Śucīndram and South Travancore to shed their inferiority. During the last few decades, they have been making strenuous attempts to intermarry with other social groups like the Veḷḷāḷas. The wealthier sections among the Dēvadāsis have often succeeded in their efforts, though it is found easier for their daughters to be married outside their group, than for their sons to secure brides from other castes.

119. Compare what Abdur Razāk says about their position in Vijayanagar: " The dancing girl castes and their allies i.e, their brothers and other relatives, the Mēlakkārans are now practically the sole repository of Indian Music ".

SECTION 10. THE TEMPLE—AS A CONSUMER

The Temple is a huge consumer of commodities and services. Indeed, there is no place south of Trivandrum where such a large quantity and such a wide variety of articles are in demand every day. The economic life of the people is, in no small measure, influenced by the role played by the temple as a consumer.

In the early stages of the history of Śucīndram, the requirements were comparatively few; some rice for offerings, flowers, sandal, milk, ghee and oil were about all that were needed. No doubt, the feeding of brahmins which prevailed so early as the 9th century A.D. demanded a considerable supply of rice, vegetables and condiments. The steady increase in the number of people to be fed, resulted in more need for these commodities. Ghee for the maintenance of "perpetual" lamps and flower for the images were other requirements, the demand for which increased with the growth of the pagoda.

During and subsequent to the 11th century A.D., the number of images and shrines rose steadily. Endowments also became more numerous. The result was that the articles required by the temple increased manyfold. Unfortunately, none of the early inscriptions of Śucīndram furnishes a full list of the articles used by the temple. But the long epigraphic record of Vīra Rāma Varma of 646 M.E (1471 A.D.) mentions details of the variety of articles needed in connection with the conduct of a specified pūjā (the Cempakarāman Pūjā). Associated with the performance of the pūjā, the anointing of the images and the feeding of brahmins also were to take place. Besides rice, milk, ghee and oil, coconuts, vegetables and sundry other commodities were required. Kadali (plantain) fruits, both of the ripe and the unripe variety, betel leaves, arecanuts, pepper, sandal paste, kuṁkum (saffron), paccaikarpūram (camphor) and pannīr (rosewater) were included in the list. A considerable quantity of salt, tamarind, chilies and condiments, as also fire-wood, must have been used, although they are not mentioned in the epigraph.[120]

The Śucīndram inscription of 665 M.E. (1489 A.D.), too, gives us an idea of the wide variety of articles required in connexion with the abhiṣēkha, pūjā and brahmin feeding provided for by the endowment. These included rice, gram, pulses, milk, oil, ghee, turmeric, pepper, fruits, coconuts, plaintain fruits and plaintain leaves, betel and arecanuts, pac-

120. Compare a similar list of articles used in other South Indian temples from an inscription of 1372 A.D. Ep Carnatica IV Gundulpet 35 and also S.I.I., Vol. II, No. 6.

caikarpūram, kuṁkum and pannīr. An interesting feature about the list of articles found in both the inscriptions mentioned above, is the large demand for spices. Information from other South Indian inscriptions confirms this tendency which prevailed in other temples, too, even in the 13th century A.D.

The Accounts of the Śucīndram pagoda found in the palm-leaf records, ranging from the last quarter of the 17th century A.D., present full details about the numerous articles needed every day. The requirements included, besides the articles mentioned above, sesamum, mustard, sugar, ghul, unguents, incense, red-paint, scented dust, cotton and silk thread as well as cotton and silk cloth. A considerable quantity of firewood was in demand for the normal requirements of the temple, not to speak of cartloads of fuel needed in connection with the feeding at Ūṭṭupura.

In fact, the large-scale feeding in the Ūṭṭupura itself, necessitated a demand for vast quantities of different commodities. Rice was undoubtedly the principal requirement. On an average, fifteen paṟas of rice were used for the daily feeding in the Ūṭṭupura in the early part of the present century. Earlier, about 1850 A.D., only ten paṟas of rice per day were needed. The Accounts of the temple indicate that, for the year 1017 M.E. (1841-42) A.D., about 3487 paṟas of rice were used for the free feeding alone. In the 18th centuryA.D., generally about 2900 paṟas were found enough. Over and above the consumption in the Ūṭṭupura, daily 4½ kōṭṭās or 45 paṟas of rice were, and still continue to be cooked in connection with the offerings to the deities ; thus, the total quantity of rice needed by the temple was enormous.

Obviously, corresponding to the quantity of rice used in the Ūṭṭupura, other commodities like condiments, pulses, salt, tamarind, chilies, coconuts, oils, vegetables etc., were required. In the early part of the 19th century A.D., on these miscellaneous articles alone, a sum of about Rs. 3,320 was spent, while, by the middle of the century, it rose to very nearly Rs. 4,000 per annum. When it is remembered that the general level of prices was much lower than in the present century, the enormous quantity of the various commodities used, can be imagined.

A brisk trade with Śucīndram was the natural outcome of the steady demand for various commodities. There is evidence showing that the markets of Vaḍaśśēry and Mailāḍi, held twice a week (the former on Thursdays and Sundays and the latter on Wednesdays and Saturdays respectively), besides the age-long commercial mart of Kōṭṭār, were the

principal centres of supply. Salt was obtained from Vāriyūr, where, salt pans had been worked as early as the 11th century A.D., if not earlier.[121] With the discontinuance of the Ūṭṭupura feeding at noon and night every day, obviously the demand declined considerably. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, even at present, the temple is the largest consumer of articles in the locality.

The special ceremonies of the temple created additional demand for numerous commodities. Besides the day-to-day round of ceremonies, the monthly and annual festivals required enormous quantities of a wide variety of articles. The erection of pandals and temporary sheds, the decorations of the Vāhanās and images, as well as the conduct of special feasts called for other goods and services. Bamboos, coir, dried leaves of coconut palms, cloth, silk, prodigious quantities of flower-garlands and numberless other things were required. Indeed, the temple was a huge mart during the Utsavas.

On the whole, the pagoda was a mammoth institution and a great consumer. No wonder that the life of multitudes of peoples in Nāñcināḍ was influenced by the economic aspect of the activities of the temple. Śucīndram became a seat of small-scale industries and a brisk centre of internal trade. In fact, a study of the temple in its economic aspect serves as a corrective to the exaggeration of the isolation and self-sufficiency of the medieval village stressed by certain writers.[122]

SECTION 11. THE TEMPLE — AS A LANDLORD

Early possessions of the temple : From early times, the temple at Śucīndram was a wealthy institution, owning a considerable extent of landed property. It has been noticed already how an inscription of Māṛan Caḍayan mentions Nṛipaśēkharavaḷanallūr, as a dēvadāna of the Emperumān of Śucīndram. Nṛipaśēkharavaḷanallūr was the early name of Kakkāḍu, the village just to the east of Śucīndram. At present, it has over 120 acres of paddy lands within its boundaries. And, it has to be remembered that, in early times, certainly before the 12th century A.D., the dēvadāna village of Nṛipaśēkharavaḷanallūr comprised within its jurisdiction, the hamlet of Tenvaḷanallūr, the present Kākkumūr. This is evident from the inscription of Kōdai Kēralavarman of 320 M.E. (1145 A.D.) which refers to Tenvaḷanallūr as *"Ittēvar dēvadānaṅgaḷil*

121. T.A.S., I. p. 247.

122. See Simkins: 'Agricultural Geography', p. 73 and Gadgil: Industrial Evolution,', p. 13. Contra-Barbosa: 'An Account', II, p. 67.

nirupśēkharanallūrp paḍum tenvaḷanallūr". Kākkumūr at present, has an acreage of about 220 acres of paddy lands. Another inscription, dated 402 M.E. or 1227 A.D., describes Vaḍavaḷanallūr also as a dēvadāna of Śucīndramuḍaiya Mahādēvar. Vaḍavaḷanallūr is apparently the village now known as Nallūr, lying to the north-east of Śucīndram. This village, too, is surrounded by paddy fields extending to about 200 acres.

Besides, there was the cultivable area belonging to Śucīndram proper. Śucīndram was, as observed already, a brahmadēya by the 10th century A.D. Though the brahmin settlers were the owners of the landed property, the produce was used also to meet the requirements of the temple. Indeed, the colony of brahmins was established there and land was settled on them, primarily to subserve the interests of the temple. But there is no means of ascertaining the exact area of the different regions, which were actually brought under cultivation in the early period. A certain part alone, probably the most fertile and easily accessible portion of the vast area, was made arable at the outset. Perhaps, it was only later, when more income was needed, that the rest of the land in and near Śucīndram was brought under the plough.

Land reclamation : The expanse of arable land lying to the west of the pagoda, known as the Śivindappaṟṟu, extending over 300 acres, seems to have been originally comprised in the brahmadēya. The probability is that only a small part of this total area was actually cultivated in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. The rest was only gradually brought under cultivation. Whenever an endowment of land was made to the temple towards meeting any specified charge like provision of offerings to the deity or of food for brahmins, waste land was purchased from the authorities of the pagoda by the donor of the gift and was again settled on them. The Mūlaparuḍa sabhai, receiving the land and an amount of money for its reclamation, arranged to plough and irrigate it, making it arable. The actual process of bringing the land under cultivation is made clear by certain epigraphs. For example, an inscription of Māṟan Caḍayan[123] states that a particular plot of waste land was ploughed well, irrigated with water, and made arable by the Mūlaparuḍa sabhai—"*Ivvellai naḍuvu kiḍanda mainnilamum takkiśum iṟaivukkāḷum nirakka kutti vayakki maṇḍu nīr pāyap paṇṇinamaiyil*".

That the Sabhai reclaimed land is evident from an inscription of 404 M.E. (1299 A.D.).[124] The temple encouraged reclamation indirectly,

123. T.A.S., IV, p. 119
124. T.A.S., VIII, p. 35.

too. Pious people, at times, thought it meritorious to reclaim land in order to bestow it on the temple. The Śucīndram inscription of 404 M.E.[125] states that one Kēśavan Arañgan of Pudumāḍam endowed to the Dvārakai Emperumān shrine a plot of land reclaimed by him. *"Som yennuḍaiya cempon tōṭṭattiruttil nālu vēliyilahapaṭṭa nilattinmēl"*.[126] Similar types of endowments were not unknown in the case of other temples, too.

As years wore on, endowments increased, and more of land was brought under cultivation. Unfortunately, no accurate record is available of the increase in the cultivated land from time to time. It is only from incidental or indirect references that we can gather certain facts concerning the extent of land owned by the pagoda. An example of such a reference is found in an inscription of 716 M.E. (1541 A.D.). This epigraph, while recording the royal settlement of a grievance of the landowners of Tērūr, reveals that in Tērūr Paṟṟu, the Śucīndram temple possessed Dēvadāna land to the extent of 120 mā.[127] Thus, even from the available data, which represents but a part of the real situation, it is certain that the temple had become, in due course, a very wealthy landlord.

Naturally, all through its long history, down to 1812 A.D., the responsibility of cultivating the lands devolved upon the authorities of the pagoda. It appears that in the very early period, i.e., about the 9th century A.D., the Mūlaparuḍa sabhai itself had the lands farmed with the help of labourers and supervisors. As evidence of direct farming undertaken by the managers of the temple may be cited the data learnt from the inscription of the 5th year of Māran Caḍayan already noticed, and also the information found in the inscription of the 14th year of Rāja Rāja. In the latter epigraph it is stated that in respect of lands which were exempt from taxes, the supervision was to be undertaken by the 'dēvakarmis'. *"Kaḍan paṟṟāta nilattu dēvakarmigal kaṇkāṇittu varuvārkaḷāvar"*.

But soon, and very probably even before Rāja Rāja's time, the system of leasing out the temple land to tenants must have arisen. The important inscription of the 15th year of Rāja Rājā makes this clear. A specific reference is found to the class of tenants and the transfer of

125. Ibid., p 36.

126. A.R.E. 32 of 1906; 103 of 1912; 128 of 1912; 658 of 1919 and also A R.E. 1913, Part II, para 24.

127 See Appendix Inscription No. 64

control over them from the hands of the Mūlaparuḍa sabhai to the Mahāsabhai. Again, a later inscription, that of 398 M.E. (1223 A.D.), speaks of land let on lease for cultivation. "*Uḻavoṟṟikoṇḍa dēvadānam ten paṟakkai nilam āṟu māvilum*". The epigraph of 404 M.E. (1229 A.D.) specifies the quantity of paddy that the tenants of some plots of Dēvadāna land were to pay the temple.[128]

Relations with the tenants : We have no means of ascertaining how far the temple as a landowner differed from other private landowners. Formally there was one difference. All leases, as indeed all transactions of the temple were entered into, in the name of Caṇḍēśvara, the first servant of God. This feature served to emphasize the sacred character of the transaction, reminding the tenants that they held the land of God and that they should be immaculate in discharging their obligations.

Lithic, as well as palm-leaf records of the temple, furnish clear evidence of strict and efficient control exercised over the tenants. Besides the supervision undertaken by the dēvarkarmis during the cultivation, the authorities themselves took every precaution to see that the paddy due to the temple was taken to its precincts at the prescribed time, and measured in the proper manner. The inscription of 999 A.D. states that the tenants were required to convey the stipulated quantity of paddy to the temple in the harvest season and entrust it to the authorities measuring it with the 'bhaṭṭārakal' of three nāḻis as the measure accepted by the temple. The insistence on the use of the 'temple-measure' for the purpose shows the precaution taken against any foul play on the part of tenants. That, similarly, a fixed unit of measure made of brass (*ceppu nāḻi*) was employed for receiving the rice arranged to be supplied to the temple, is learnt from an epigraph of Kōdai Kēraḷavarman.[129]

No remissness or delay in the payment of the paddy by tenants was tolerated. Fines were imposed on those tenants who erred in the discharge of their obligations. The inscriptions of the 13th century A.D. and the palm-leaf records of the 17th century A.D. specify the rates of penalty. None of the inscriptions in Śucīndram tells us whether failure to comply with the conditions of assignment led to the tenants being deprived of their cultivating right. But several palm-leaf records containing the accounts of the 18th century A.D. mention the enforcement of this

128 T.A.S., VIII, p 35.
129. T.A.S., IV. p 21.

drastic penalty.[130] In fact, during the age of the Yōgakkārs' supremacy, a very stringent enforcement of the conditions of the tenancy was the order of the day. Several records specify the fines imposed on such of the tenants who supplied inferior type of paddy or tried to adopt unfair means in measuring out the paddy due to the temple.

However, this does not by any means indicate that tenants were oppressed and harassed by the authorities of the pagoda. At any rate, in the early period, it is indisputably clear that tenants were protected from the rapacity or cruelty of others. The inscription of the 14th year of Rāja Rāja (999 A.D.), noticed already, lays down that any one who obstructs a tenant from promptly paying the paddy due to the temple will incur the sin of having violated Śivadharma.[131] Again, an inscription of Uḍayār Śrī Cōḷa Pāṇḍya reveals the concern evinced by the authorities in protecting their tenants. No cesses or minor taxes were to be exacted in the shape of tenancy obligations. The epigraph runs thus: *"Innilam Uḷuṅguḍikaḷai Yādānum oru kuḍimai kāṭṭātoḻivatākum"*[132]

In respect of later periods, too, the palm-leaf records present several instances of humane treatment meted out to tenants. Advances of loans were occasionally made from the temple treasury to needy cultivators.

However, tenants were not authorized to transfer the lease of land in their charge to any person without the express consent of the temple authorities. A specific case of violation of this injunction was brought to the notice of the Mahāsabhai. The matter was investigated into, and, presumably, a severe penalty was imposed on the offender.[133] Though the decision of the assembly on the matter is not known to us on account of the incompleteness of the inscription, the very fact that the accusation against the erring tenant was made before the sabhai, shows that sub-lease was prohibited. It is not known how long this condition remained in force. A palm-leaf record of 862 M.E. (1687 A.D.), as well as several others of later days, show that sub-leasing was adopted then. Perhaps,

130. A Vaṭṭeḻuttu inscription of Tirukkākkarai (South Trāvancore), ascribable to the middle of the 10th century A.D., specified this condition of the lease.
'நெல கொடடகாரத்தில் அளவு கொடாக்கில் காராண்மை விடக்கடவியன்".
131. T.A.S., IV. p. 129.
132. Kudimai may mean tenancy dues or petty exactions Several Cōla inscriptions use this term. See, for example, A. R E. 121 of 1925 and 140 of 1925. An epigraph No. 147 of 1925 throws light on the connotation of the term. It runs "பெருவரி, சில்வரி, திருவாசலில் போன்ற குடிமை எபபோபட்டதும".
133. T.A.S., III. p. 76.

the increase in the possession of landed property necessitated a modification of the original injunction.

Kārāṇmai :— Besides the land leased out to tenants for cultivation, the proceeds of which were to be paid to the temple, there was another type of tenure in vogue in Śucīndram and the rest of South India. This was known as Kārāṇmai tenure. It appears to have been common in the period after the 16th century A.D., although it was not unknown in the 11th and 12th centuries. Kārāṇmai, used in the sense of a tenure, indicates the hereditary right of cultivating and realizing the yield of a plot of land T. A. G. Rao defines Kārānmai as a perpetual lease by which lands are made over by the trustees or managers of temples to those who are employed for the performance of certain duties therein.[134] But, this definition does not include settlement of lands as a reward for service rendered in the past, although that tenure also was described as Kārāṇmai. In fact, this was the most common form of Kārānmai. Many are the endowments made by kings or other individuals settling plots of land as 'Kārāṇmai' on particular persons for the discharge of specified duties or the supply of stipulated goods and services to the temple. In return for the service, the holder of the land, Kārāṇmaikkāran, as he was called, was to enjoy the produce of the endowed land. Invariably, the land so granted, yielded much more than what was needed for the performance of the duty ; the excess income was meant for the sustenance of the tenant and his family, in return for the services he rendered to the temple. The supply of flower-garlands, ghee or oil for 'perpetual' lamps, and of other requirements was guaranteed by Kārānmai settlement of land. Further, this pattern of contract was adopted even in respect of services like sweeping, parasol-bearing, conchblowing, engraving inscriptions, keeping watch, and a host of other duties.

This was a hereditary settlement, and ordinarily, as long as the stipulated duty was performed satisfactorily, the right could not be taken away from the original tenant or his heirs. But the position underwent a radical change when the temple and its property were taken over by the Government in 1812 A.D. True, for a time, many Kārānmai holders were left undisturbed. Gradually, the Government insisted upon employees performing services on the basis of a fixed remuneration. Now, all the Kārānmaikkār receive monthly remuneration ; a few get a specified quantity of cooked rice, offered as oblations to the deity.

134. T A S, II p. 139.

Conclusion :— On the whole, it is difficult to exaggerate the influence that the temple has exercised, through the ages, on the social life of the people. The Śucīndram temple, like others of its kind, was a powerful social and economic factor. It was also a source of religious inspiration for the people. Many and varied were the secular functions it discharged. As landholder, consumer of goods and services, and employer, as a centre of cultural and educational activity, in short, as the focus of social life and development, the Śucīndram temple has played an important role. It has been rightly said of Hindu temples that " they were fortresses, treasuries, court-houses, parks, fairs, exhibition-sheds, halls of learning and of pleasure, all in one ".[135]

135. I. A., Vol. XXIV. p. 256 n. 41.

CHAPTER X

THE SUCINDRAM PRATYAYAM OR KAIMUKKU

SECTION 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRATYAYAM

No institution has attained such unique celebrity in the history of the Śucīndram temple as the time-honoured ordeal conducted there. Śucīndram Pratyayam, or Kaimukku,[1] as it has been popularly known, was a peculiar mode of testing the innocence of a suspected offender. The accused was to dip his hand into boiling ghee at the temple, and if his hand was left unhurt, his innocence was established. Nothing has contributed to the popular veneration of the pagoda as this fiery ordeal held under its authority.

Originally this ordeal must have been instituted in Śucīndram by reason of the antiquity and the special Mūrti Viśēṣ or sacredness of the temple. The establishment and frequent adoption of the test, in its turn, augmented the sanctity and popular esteem of the pagoda. The circumstance that the ordeal was exclusively restricted to the Nambūdiris, the highest section of the Malabār brahmins, added a special halo of reputation to the temple. Śucīndram lay far away from the native land of the Nambūdiris, and their adoption of this place for the conduct of the ordeal increased the fame of the temple all the more.

1. Pratyayam (प्रत्ययम्) literally means confidence or trust. As applied to the ordeal, it denotes that the Divine Will or confidence was ascertained regarding the particular offence. The Tamiḻ word 'Kaimukku' emphasizes the actual mode of conducting the ordeal. Literally it means 'dipping the hand'.

At the outset, any famous and ancient Śiva temple would have been considered as a suitable venue for the conduct of the ordeal. Among the Trimūrtis, Śiva is reputed to be the ferocious deity — the Rudra Mūrty or Mūrkha Mūrty — whose wrath is dreaded. That accounts for the institution of ordeals in Śiva temples like those of Kārtigappaḷḷi and Ceṅgannūr.[2] But, a distinctive factor, which appears to have prompted the introduction of the 'Kaimukku' in Śucīndram, was the legendary association of Indra's purification with this sacred fane. In order to redeem himself from the curse of Gautama, Indra underwent the process of submerging himself in boiling ghee at Śucīndram.[3] This mythical background of Indra's purification in the shrine, evidently, served as the cause for the institution of the ordeal at this place.

It must be noted that, besides Śucīndram, there were many places in India and outside, where more or less similar ordeals were adopted from early times. Indeed, for a proper appreciation of the Kaimukku test at Śucīndram, a brief survey of the ancient forms of trial in vogue at different places is essential.

SECTION 2. ANCIENT ORDEALS

A rather strange phenomenon was that, in many countries of the world, in the past, the help of divine power was invoked for the detection of criminals and settlement of disputes. When law and justice were in their infancy in human society, it was perhaps natural that the aid of divine agency was sought in the matter of ascertaining truth.

The Ordeal, as an avowed instrument of God's Will, has prevailed among various widely separated nations of the world, in the different regions of Asia, Africa and Europe. The Bible refers to the employment of 'the bitter water of chastity' for testing the innocence of persons suspected of sexual offences. The earliest account of such an ordeal is in Numbers V, which describes the mode of administering to a Hebrew woman accused of adultery, 'the bitter water'. The water was to be mixed with the dust of the tabernacle floor, along with the curse laid on it, in order to cause her belly to swell, if guilty. This shows that the ordeal had prevailed among the Jews of old.

2. Among other deities in the Hindu pantheon, the goddess Kāli is also believed to be awe-inspiring and ferocious. It is significant that in Malabār, various kinds of ordeals used to take place in the Kāḷi or Bhagavati temples until recent times. Besides ordeals, oaths and pledges were taken in front of the deity in these temples.

3. See Chapter IV, p. 95.

A similar ordeal for incontinence is still in use among the natives of the Gold Coast of Africa. Livingstone describes the adoption of ordeal as common among all the negro races north of the Zāmbesi. Again, the prevalence among the Greeks of compurgation by fire, has been referred to by Sophocles in the 'Antigone'. Besides, among Christian Saints there are several instances of triumphant emergence from the Fire Ordeal.[4] Throughout Europe, the ordeal existed under the sanction of law and of the Church almost to the end of the Middle Ages. There is the interesting incident of Richardis, wife of Charles the Fat, proving her innocence by jumping into a fire, clothed in a waxed shift, and emerging unhurt. Evidence is also available of the Egyptians and the Chaldaens having resorted to the Divine Agency for the detection of crimes.[5]

Among the Hindus, the ordeal has been adopted in nine different ways:—(1) by the balance, (2) by water, (3) by fire, (4) by poison, (5) by the cosha or drinking water in which images of Sun and other deities had been washed, (6) by chewing rice, (7) by hot oil, (8) by red-hot iron, and also (9) by drawing two images out of a jar into which they have been thrown. India abounds in literary references to the adoption of these various ordeals. There is, for example, the epic story of the virtuous Sīta, after her redemption from Laṅka, proving to her jealous husband her innocence by passing through fire. The fire ordeal is described also in the Hindu codes of Yājñavalkya and others.

Literary as well as epigraphic testimony is found showing that the ordeal was adopted frequently in various places of South India. For instance, it is learnt that 'Tiruttakka Dēvar', the celebrated author of 'Jīvakacintāmaṇi', had to undergo the ordeal of handling a piece of red-hot iron in order to prove his purity.[6] The Purāṇic story of Nanda, the devotee, vindicating his sincerity by emerging unscathed from the ordeal of fire, is well-known. Again, the Periya Purāṇa states that in the great religious contest between the Jain paṇḍits and Tirujñāna-sambanda, their respective holy books were subjected to the fire ordeal in order to prove their sanctity, and that the Śaiva cause finally tri-

4 e.g. St Francis of Paula, St. Catherine of Seinna

5. Encyclopaedia Britanica Vol. XX, pp. 173-75 and 'Chambers' Encyclopaedia, Vol. VII. pp. 628-29.

6. Introduction by Mahāmahōpādhyāya V. Swaminatha Aiyar to his edition of 'Jīvakacintāmaṇi

umphed.[7] Further, we hear of the ordeal to which Kulaśēkhara Āḷvār thrusted his hand into a pot containing a live cobra in order to prove the innocence of the Vaiṣṇava devotees who were charged with the theft of some jewels belonging to the temple.[8]

There is an interesting instance of ordeal belonging to the 13th century A.D. In connection with a theft of cash and jewels in the temple of Tirunālakkunṟamuḍaiya Nāyanār, the suspected arcakas were called upon to handle a red-hot ploughshare in the court.[9] It is stated that the hands of all the suspected priests were burnt and that they confessed their guilt.

In much later times, in various parts of South India, there have been found the practices of devotees jumping into fire-pits or pouring boiling water over the body in order to evince their divine inspiration.[10] The more dreadful custom of beating the chest with a red-hot chain of iron was also in vogue. These frantic feats have been largely resorted to by 'devotees' in order to impress upon the populace their sincerity and devotion.

Several kinds of ordeals for testing the guilt of people are known to have been adopted in Malabār. Fra Bartolomeo writes — " In former times, if a suspected person waded through the stream infested by a crocodile or put his finger into boiling oil, melted lead or a cocoanut shell in which a snake was concealed and drew it out unhurt, he was declared to be innocent ",[11] And, these strange methods of trial were in vogue so late as the 19th century. Forbes observes that, in the British District of Malabār, ordeals of different kinds were resorted to, and that they were conducted under the superintendence of the British Officers. He adds that the seal of the East India Company was imprinted on the waxcloth covering of the hand. These facts afford proof of the British

7. In all these instances learnt from the epics and Purānas, apart from the historicity or otherwise of the incidents narrated, the inference is that (*at the latest*), during the age of the authors of these works, traditions about the ordeals were in vogue.

8 " ஆரஙகெடப்பரனன்பா கொள்ளாரெனற வர்களுக்கே
வாரங்கொடுகுடபபாம்பிற் கையிடடவன் மாறறலரை "

See M. Raghava Aiyangar's " ஆழ்வார்கள் காலநிலை " Part I, p. 177 and C. Chellam's Śrī Kulaśēkharālvār Caritam, pp. 9-14.

9. A.R.E. No. 372 of 1906.

10. Noteworthy is the fact that Muslims also adopt the practice of jumping into fire, during the " Muharam ".

11. " Voyage to the East Indies " p. 312

Government, in its early days, having recognized and employed the age-old systems of trial by ordeal.

In Travancore, not only in the famous temples of Śucīndram, Kārtigappaḷḷi, Ceṅgannūr and Ēṟṟumānūr, but in several other less prominent ones, too, ordeals were conducted, down to the end of the 19th century. Walter Hamilton in his 'Description of Travancore'[12] says—"When in a scheme of judicial organization, Col. Munro, the then British Resident of Trāvancore, proposed to abolish trials by ordeal, the assembled pandits and the Queen stoutly opposed it. They clung to the practice with such remarkable pertinacity that it became necessary, in compliance with their united supplications, to admit in certain cases such trials under the express sanction of the Dewan."

A striking feature about these trials both in Travancore and Malabār is that the ordeals were invoked not only in cases in which Hindus were involved. Even if the suspected offenders belonged to other religions, ordeals of one kind or other were employed; only they were not permitted to conduct the test within the precincts of Hindu temples. There have been instances of Moors, Jews and Christians in Malabār and Travancore having been subjected to such tests. In 1821, a Jew complained to the British Resident of Travancore that, under a burden of suspicion, he was obliged to plunge his hand into a vessel full of boiling oil, and not being able to sustain the fiery scrutiny, lost the cause and the use of his hand.[13]

Among the various forms of ordeals, those commonly resorted to in Malabār and Travancore were (1) Ordeals by poison (2) Water Ordeals (3) Fire Ordeals and (4) Ordeals of the balance.[14] The application of the particular type depended upon the caste to which the person or persons on trial belonged. The higher the caste in the social gradation, the higher the form of trial; thus the brahmins were tried by the balance, the Kṣatriyās by fire, the Vaiśyās by water and the Śūdras by

12. Quoted by K. P. P. Menon: "History of Kēraḷa", Vol. II, p. 257.

13. Attempts were made by the authorities of the Church to prevent Christians submitting to these ordeals. For instance, it is learnt that in the Conference held on 20th June 1599, at Udayampērūr under the presidency of the Archbishop Menesses, a decree (No. 16) was promulgated prohibiting the ordeal of Kaimukku or the red-hot ploughshare among Christians (Gedde's "History of the Church of Malabār" p. 123).

14. For a description of the various Ordeals: See Evelyn Abbot: "The History of Antiquity", Vol. IV, Ch. VII. "Alberuni's India", Vol. II, Ch. LXX, pp. 158-60. "Asiatic Researches", Vol. I, p. 389 and Beal "Buddhist Records of the Western World', Vol. II, p. 84.

poison. But, it must be observed that though this was the general basis of assignment, it was not always rigorously followed. Side by side with the distinction in caste, the gravity of the offence committed was also taken into consideration. For instance, in Śucīndram, though the Nambūdiri brahmins alone were subjected to the ordeal, yet, since its application was restricted to cases of sexual offence and murder, it was the fire ordeal that was resorted to.

SECTION 3. THE NAMBŪDIRIS AND THE ŚUCĪNDRAM PRATYAYAM

All the original records pertaining to the Pratyayam in Śucīndram[15] indicate that the ordeal was confined only to the Nambūdiri Brahmins. Local tradition fully supports this. No doubt, oaths or pledges could be taken at the entrance to the pagoda by any Hindu. But, the sacred ordeal was not resorted to by any one other than a Nambūdiri. This circumstance is intriguing. Why was the 'Kaimukku' confined to the Nambūdiris alone ? It would have been understandable if the ordeal had been restricted to brahmins only or even to all Malayāḷi brahmins. It is known that certain Malayāli brahmins were introduced into Śucīndram about the 12th century A.D., and that in course of time they became the leading authorities of the temple. But they were 'Pōṟṟis' and not Nambūdiris, and undoubtedly in that period, there was a distinction between the two classes.

Perhaps, about the 13th century A.D., when we hear of Gōvinda prajña bhaṭārar and his dominating influence in Śucīndram, Nambūdiri Śāntikkār were employed not only in the Dvāraka Emperumān shrine but also in the main temple. The fact that Śānti in the Sthāṇunātha-svāmy temple is exclusively restricted to the Nambūdiris of three villages,[16] affords a clue. More than that, the customary obligation demanded of every Nambūdiri of those three villages to perform the Śānti in the Śucīndram pagoda at least once, indicates that there was a definite bond connecting the Nambūdiris of those villages with the Śucīndram pagoda.

In the absence of any documentary information on the question, we can only conjecture that, while the Pōṟṟis became the Yōgakkār some-

15. These documents, called 'Kaimukku Records' are found in the Vattappalli Matha. They deal with the details connected with a number of cases of Kaimukku ordeal conducted in the temple. The earliest among the available documents pertains to the ordeal held in 802 M.E. (1627 A.D.) The 'Ācārakkanakku' or the accounts of the temple also furnish some data.

16. Supra — Chapter VII, p. 176.

time in the 13th or 14th century, there soon arose a close association of Nambūdiris with the pagoda. Whether this contact emerged under the orders of the Vēṇāḍ king or the Nambūdiri Svāmiyār "the Great Tiruvaḍi" of Trivandrum or his deputy 'Gōvinda Prajña' himself, we have no means of knowing. However, when the Śānti and Tantram of the pagoda were settled on Nambūdiris, Śucīndram came to be looked upon as a specially sacred place by the Nambūdiris. That seems to be the explanation for the Kaimukku having become confined to the Nambūdiris.[17]

The palm-leaf records indicate that, by far the largest number of 'Kaimukku' ordeals occurred in respect of sexual offence. Out of a dozen 'Kaimukku' records, barely one deals with the crime of murder; all the others pertain to violation of sexual morality. Apparently, the explanation for this circumstance is found in the great importance attached by the Nambūdiris to feminine chastity.

The social customs and institutions of the Nambūdiris are, in some respects, peculiar. An intensely religious and orthodox class of rich land-owners, the Nambūdiris have, in times past, maintained a lofty position. Their social eminence and cultural attainments served to foster high ideals of conduct.

A peculiar social custom was that the eldest man of the family alone was entitled to marry from his own caste. While it led to the junior members consorting with girls of other castes, this social custom resulted in a numerous body of Nambūdiri women remaining spinsters. The great emphasis on a high standard of feminine chastity is largely ascribable to this feature. The regulation of women's conduct in private life and the dreadful penalty meted out to women convicted of moral lapses prove unmistakably the supreme prominence attached to womanly conduct. In addition to a number of stringent injunctions, the Nambūdiris had also developed in their villages a peculiar mode of trial for sexual offences—the trial known as Smārtavicāram. Since the Kaimukku at Śucīndram appears to be connected with, and a continuation of the Smārtavicāram, a brief survey of the latter is necessary[18]

17. It is noteworthy that any Nambūdiri, even though, not belonging to the three particular villages, was eligible to submit himself to the ordeal.

18. The exact nature of relationship between Smārtavicāram conducted by the village organization and the Śucīndram Kaimukku is not mentioned in any of the original records. Neither the available documents of 'Smārtavicāram' nor those of 'Kaimukku' speak about the relationship But the terms like 'Pampu' (the letter of authorization for taking the ordeal) 'Smārtan', 'Mēlkōyimakkār', 'Mīmamsakar',

SECTION 4 SMĀRTAVICĀRAM [19]

The trial undertaken by the Village Headmen of cases of alleged conjugal infidelity is described as 'Smārtavicāram', because these trials were conducted under the auspices of the 'Smārtan' (Judge) of the village. The procedure of the 'Smārtavicāram' was as follows:

The moment a woman was suspected of adultery, the Nambūdiris living in the neighbourhood were to be informed of it by the head of the house. Failure to do so would tarnish the reputation and ruin the social position of the family. The Nambūdiri leaders of the locality proceeded to the house of the suspected woman and tried first to ascertain the genuineness of the accusation.[20] If the elders were satisfied that there was a basis for the charge, they ordered the immediate transfer of the woman to a separate shed called the Añcāmpura, which was within the compound, but apart from the main house.[21] Immediately after this, the eldest man of the family informed the ruler of the State, who, thereupon appointed a Pañcāyat to conduct the vicāram or trial. The Pañcāyat was presided over by the Smārtan, the highest religious and social authority of the village. The members consisted of two or more Mīmāmsakar or Nambūdiris well-versed in caste laws, as well as the Ahakkōyma or local head of the community and the Puṛakkōyma, who was originally the king himself, but later his deputy, usually a Taluk or village officer, empowered to maintain order during the trial. It may be added that the Mīmāmsakar were selected by the Smārta himself.

The regular trial commenced with the examination of the dāsi or the maid-servant of the accused. During the period of examination, every day at about 11 a.m. the Smārtan and his colleagues proceeded to the Añcāmpura and addressed a series of questions to the Dāsi and

etc, occurring in both the 'Kaimukku' and the 'Smārtavicāram' records point to the Pratyayam having been a corollary of the Smārtavicāram. Though all those found guilty by the Smārtas did not necessarily take the ordeal at Śucīndram, such of the accused who desired to prove their innocence at Śucīndram were permitted to proceed thither.

19. For detailed accounts of Smārtavicāram, see Logan's 'Malabar Manual'. Thurston's 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India', Nagamiah's 'State Manual', 'Travancore Census Reports' and Anantakrishna Aiyar's 'The Cochin Tribes and Castes'

20. This preliminary enquiry was held by questioning the maid servant or Dāsi attached to the suspected woman. Hence, this enquiry was called 'Dāsivicāram'. The questioning was done by the relatives of the suspected woman, in conjunction with the leading Nambūdiris of the neighbourhood.

21 Antarjanam is one who cannot be seen outside the house.

elicited details about the alleged incident. All the time, the accused was to remain within the Añcāmpura, as she was an antarjanam[22] (gōsha—not to be seen outside). At about 5 p.m., the Smārta in the presence of the Ahakkōyma, related the whole day's proceedings to the Mīmāmsakar and consulted them as to the nature of the questions to be asked the next day.[23] This enquiry continued from day to day, and, in some cases it lasted for months together and even for some years. It must be noted that all the members of the committee of enquiry were to be fed, during the entire period of trial, at the expense of the accused.

The laborious examination continued until the accused admitted her guilt or till it was indisputably proved that she was innocent. In early times, cruel devices such as the introduction of rats and snakes into the woman's apartment were employed in order to extort her confession. Such dreadful steps may have occasionally resulted in innocent women admitting trumped-up charges. Indeed, the manner in which the women suspected of immorality were tried and the drastic social ostracism which befell the convicted, seem outrageous to the modern mind. The dominant, and almost tyrannical, hold that social customs and religious belief had on the Nambūdiris is vividly exemplified by the whole trial. No consideration of personal affection or dread of social slur stood in the way of even the offender's mother, father or brother or any near relative, who was the first and perhaps the only spectator of a shady act, reporting the fact and inviting a public enquiry by society.[24]

It must, however, be mentioned that great care was taken by the judges, during the Smārtavicāram, not to be discourteous to the accused. Until the offence was definitely proved, she was treated with the courtesy and consideration due to her as a member of a respectable community. No harsh or cruel word was ever employed or abominable idea suggested, and the whole enquiry was conducted by a series of close but gentle interrogations. Her gōsha (purdah) ācāra was religiously respected, every question to her being addressed through the maid-servant.

Despite these redeeming features, none can deny that, to the modern mind, the whole procedure seems at once strange and abominable. While

22. Añcānpura is the fifth room outside the Nālukettu or the quadrangle of the main building. The Ancānpura might have been, in certain cases, only a Paccōlapura or a temporary shed with a roofing of thatched palm leaves put up for the occasion.

23. The proceedings of the Smārta in the company of the Mīmāmsakārs (excepting those relating to the questioning of the suspect) were undertaken in a neighbouring temple, and were believed to be conducted under divine guidance.

24. Travancore Census Report of 1909 p. 311.

nothing but the highest praise is due for the lofty ideal of moral purity underlying the institution, the cruelty involved in the public exposure and the subsequent penalty were dreadfully severe. Further, the tortuous mode of enquiry, coupled with the awful devices employed for extorting a confession of guilt, might lead to miscarriage of justice.

Be that as it may, once the accused admitted her guilt, the names of all those who had been implicated in her crime were elicited. Thereafter, she was treated as an outcaste. She was humiliated by a 'kai-koṭṭal' (i.e., a clap of hands by the people denoting their contempt for the 'shameless creatures') and driven out of the village and society.[25]

It is for determining the guilt of the accused men that 'Kaimukku' appeared. Such of the accused members who wished to prove their innocence could resort to it. But, Śucīndram was not the only place at which this ordeal could be conducted, nor was Kaimukku or dipping the hand into boiling ghee or oil the sole prescription for vindicating one's honour. Anantakrishna Aiyar says: "It then remains for her paramours to vindicate their character on pain of excommunication. Two courses are open to them to exculpate themselves: either undergoing the ordeal of boiling oil or of weighing "[26]

The accused Nambūdiris in North Malabār generally took the ordeal at the nearest Bhagavati temple, while those belonging to South Malabār (including Cochin and Travancore) appear to have proceeded to Ceṅgannūr or Śucīndram. There was no hard and fast rule as to the particular temple to be resorted to for the purpose, for the Kaimukku records disclose a few instances of Nambūdiris from the north also having submitted themselves to the ordeal at Śucīndram.

SECTION 5. THE PROCEDURE OF THE ORDEAL AT ŚUCĪNDRAM

The technicalities of procedure adopted in respect of the Kaimukku at Śucīndram, as gathered from the Ācārakkaṇakku, royal nīṭṭus (commands), and other records of the temple may be described as follows: The accused, if he desires to prove his innocence, requests the Bhaṭṭadiri (headman, invariably the Smārta himself) of the village Pañcāyat which

25. The fate of the convicted woman was most pitiable. She had to shift for herself. More often than not, she led a despicable existence, employed as a servant. If a child was born since the commencement of the trial, such a child would be considered as a member of the Cākiyār caste

26. "The Cochin Tribes and Castes" Vol. II, p. 213. The weighing ordeal was much milder than Kaimukku. (See Beal "Buddhist Records of the Western World" II p. 86). But a person, who had full confidence in his innocence, often preferred to undergo the Kaimukku ordeal, for that was a fierce and impressive test.

charged him with the crime, to grant him a Pampu or letter of authorization to undergo the ordeal at Śucīndram. First, the accused takes the pampu to the residence of the Tṛippāppūr Mahārāja (as the Travancore ruler was then called) and respectfully places it at his feet along with a fee of 66 fanams on a silver plank, and representing to the ruler his grievance, states his readiness to submit himself to the Pratyayam at Śucīndram. The Mahārāja then orders to prepare a nīṭṭu or communication addressed to the Sabhai of the Śucīndram temple and sends it through a Tēvāri.[27]

On reaching Śucīndram, the Tēvāri intimates the *Kōyikkāran* the object of his mission.[28] Soon after, the members of the Sabhai i.e., the Yōgakkār or Ūrāṇmaikkār, together with the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri, assemble in the Ilayanāmaṇḍapa[29] when the Tēvāri announces to them the royal order for conducting the pratyayam. If the Yōgakkār find any difficulty or inconvenience in the matter of conducting the ordeal within a few days, they intimate to the Mahārāja this circumstance. After such temporary difficulties are got over, or if the Yōgam is ready to institute the ordeal immediately, the members assemble at the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa at an appointed time.

Puttillam, one of the Ūrāṇmaikkār, takes the royal nīṭṭu, and after consulting the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri, enquires of the accountant of the Sabhai whether the royal command is in order and is in conformity with the established form.[30] When it is found that there is nothing irregular,

27. Tēvāri was an arcaka The word appears to have been derived from 'Dēvārādhana' i e., offering pūjā to the deity 'Tēvāri' must, therefore, have been a Nambūdiri arcaka in a temple of the village whence the Pampu was sent

28. The term entered as 'Kōyikkāran' in the records appears to be really 'Kōlkkāran' meaning 'one who bears the staff' i e., the guard who keeps watch at the entrance of the temple. The people employed at Śucīndram for this purpose belong to a subcaste described as Vairāvis. The head of the Vairāvis is described as 'Munnilakkāran' (முன்னிலக்காரன்) which term signifies one who stands in front of the temple as a watchman or a guard.

29. Ilayanāmandapa is the Iḷayanayinār Maṇḍapa Ilayanayinār signifies Subrahmania; in Śucīndram records, this name is frequently applied to that deity. The Mandapa in front of the Subrahmaniasvāmy shrine is thus the 'Ilayanā Mandapa'.

30. The members of the Yōgam for conducting the ordeal of Kaimukku, comprised the nine owner managers i.e, Puttillam, Kūttampalli, Mullamangalam, Pudumādam, Śrīdharamaṅgalam, Vēliyara, Araśila, Sōmāśimaṅgalam and Maṭham. Besides the Ūrāṇmaikkār, there were the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri and the Vaṭṭappalli Sthānikar. The Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri officiated practically as the chairman of the Yōgam for this purpose. After 916 M.E. i.e., 1741 A.D. the Valiya Śrīkāryamceyvār, the representative of the Government of Travancore, was also a member.

Puttillam passes it on to the accountant, who respectfully receives it on his outstretched cloth.[31] The accountant, thereafter, with the permission of all the members of the Yōgam and the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri, reads out the order.[32]

Completing this preliminary procedure, the assembly rises for the day. Sōmāśimaṅgalam proceeds to the residence of the *Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri* with the royal nīṭṭu.[33] Meeting the Bhaṭṭadiri, he takes his seat on a wooden plank and places the nīṭṭu on another. About the same time, the Tēvāri, the royal messenger, accompanied by the accused reaches the house of Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri, and bowing before the latter, places the original Pampu and a sum of 66 fanams before him. The Bhaṭṭadiri, after perusing the nīṭṭu and the original Pampu, hands over the royal nīṭṭu to the accused. The Tēvāri and the accused proceed to the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha, and interview the Sthānikar or the eldest male member of the Maṭha. Placing before him a fee of two fanams, they acquaint him with the object of the mission. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Pattar immediately proceeds along with them to the temple. The accused enters the temple by the Pūppiravātukkal (i.e., the doorway of the room where flower-garlands were kept), and takes his stand to the east of the entrance.[34] The kinsmen of the accused, the Kōyima Manusyam (i.e., the representative of the village of the defendant), as also the person who

31. A member of any community other than that of the Nambūdiri cannot receive with the naked hand anything from a Nambūdiri without causing pollution to the latter.

32. The Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri is the senior-most of the four Mēl-śāntis or head-priests in the Śucīndram pagoda. He is the supervisor of the Mēlśāntis and their representative in important rituals connected with the temple. He plays a leading role in the conduct of the Kaimukku.

33. Though the description of this high dignitary is entered in the records as 'Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri', in reality, he seems to have been none other than the 'Mūttamanē Bhaṭṭadiri', the first word indicating his house-name. He is the head of a family, the members of which are well-versed in Samskrit The eldest member of the family is a smārta, and he used to officiate as judge in cases of smārtavicāram in his locality. On every occasion of the conduct of Kaimukku in Śucīndram, he was specially called upon to be present.

34. Pūppiravātal is really the northern entrance to the Udayamārtānda Maṇḍapa. There is a small enclosure just to the east of this entrance, which serves at present as a store room for keeping vessels. Mr. Parameswara Sarma, the present Vattappalli Sthānikar, says that at about the same place there was formerly a much bigger enclosure, where the flower-garlands used to be prepared and kept. That room was demolished, and a smaller one took its place about 973 M.E. (1798 A.D.) when the present Northern Śrībalipura was constructed.

had written the pampu, take their stand to the west of the doorway.[35] It is stated that before the Yōgakkār and the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri take their duly appointed seats near the Pūppiravātukkal, none should set his eyes on the lamp inside.

About the time of sunset, the members of the Sabhai come to the spot and sit in their allotted places. The Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri takes his seat in the kannimūla (south-west corner) with the nīṭṭu held out in his right hand. To his north sits Mullamaṅgalam, to the north of the latter is Pudumāḍam; still further to the north sits the Maṭham (the Tekkuman Maṭham Ūrānmaikkār is invariably called as the Maṭham) and further north is Vēliyara. To his east, at the Īśānamūlai i.e. north-east corner, is Sōmaśimaṅgalam; to his south Kūṟṟampaḷḷi, and still to his south Āraśila, and still further south sits Śrīdharamaṅgalam and at the southernmost extremity is Puttillam. During the time that the Sabhai is thus formed and is in session, there should not be any lamp other than the one inside the Sabhai.

The accountant of the Sabhai, removing his upper cloth and tying it around his waist, stands to the north of the seat of Sōmāśimaṅgalam with a palm-leaf and the style held in his hands. The Bhaṭṭadiri then ascertains whether the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar is come. Next, the Bhaṭṭadiri finds out whether the Pāraśavan, the servant who attends to the blowing of the conch, beating of the drum etc., is free from all kinds of pollution. Further, he ascertains from the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri whether the materials for the offerings to the deity, at least for seven days, are in store. These conditions are ascertained before ordering the commencement of the proceedings of the day. The Pāraśava conch-blower is to take his stand to the west of the doorway. Should the service of any paid servant be found necessary, one or more, are permitted to be present there by the side of the conch-blower.

The accused, and the personal servants accompanying him, are required to have observed a complete fast the whole day. Sōmāśimaṅgalam, on behalf of Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri next finds out from the various members of the Yōgam whether the accused can be called upon to lay down the usual fee. Upon the unanimous approval of the Yōgam, the

35. It is presumed that when the date for the conduct of Kaimukku is fixed, these persons belonging to the native village of the defendant also come to Śucīndram. The Kōyima Manusyam or the Akakōyima, as pointed out by Mr. L. K. Anantakrishna Aiyar ('the Cochin Tribes and Castes', Vol. II. p. 210), was the local head of the community.

accused is asked to lay down 8 fanams.[36] First the amount is placed by the side of Sōmāśimaṅgalam. Then, the accused, again taking the amount in his hand, requests the members of the Yōgam individually to permit him to enter upon the test. The amount of 8 fanams is, thereafter, passed on to the accountant of the Sabhai. The accountant credits two fanams to the temple treasury and pays the remaining six into the hands of the Kāṇiyātccai Ilvāṇiyan,[37] who must then, bring six rolls of betel leaves, their stalks having been already removed.

The members of the Yōgam then rise and proceed to Tekkēḍam side, and at a spot, a little to the south of the entrance of Tekkēdam and to the north of the Karivēlakkal and to the east of the Vasanta Mandapa, the Yōgam assembles again.[38] Here too, the exact place that each member is to occupy is specified as follows : to the north of the Karivēlakkal, Śrīdharamaṅgalam sits facing west ; by the side of a pillar to the south of that sits Sōmāśimaṅgalam ; at the Kannimūla i.e., south-west corner of the pillar and to the south of that is Kūṟṟampalli ; near the pillar to the east of it is Vēliyara ; immediately to the south of the Karivēlakkal is the Maṭha ; on another side of the above-mentioned Karivēlakkal sits Pudumādam ; immediately to the west of the latter is Araśila ; to the north of Araśila is Mullamaṅgalam ; still to the north sits Puttillam and further to the north of him the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri. On the southern side of the Karivēlakkal must stand the accountant of the Sabhai.

After the members of the Yōgam take their respective seats, the relatives of the accused and the Kōyima Manuṣyam are to stand to the south of the Kalaśa Maṇḍapam.[39] Soon after the various people have

36 A Fanam is equivalent to 2 annas 3 pies.

37 Kāniyātccai is a general term signifying the customary right of furnishing certain goods and services for the village community on certain occasions in return for seasonal payments in kind. For example, the washerman and barber of a village render certain customary services as on occasions of marriage, funerals etc. Ilavāniyan is the name of a caste in South India. Originally, the members of the caste traded on betel leaves In connection with the Kaimukku also the Ilavāniyan was the person entrusted with the supply of betel leaves

38. Karivēlam is a term signifying the 'treasury' There was formerly a small room built of stone walls near Tekkēdam. The room is still found there , it is now used only for keeping the jewels temporarily during the period of the utsavas.

39. Kalaśa Mandapam was located in the northern part of the Tekkēdam Namaskāra Mandapa. There was, formerly, a separate room in that spot, where at present, merely screens are put up enclosing the space It is actually within that space that nine pots of water and one vessel of Pañcagavyam, used for the abhiṣēkha of the deities in Tekkēdam and Vadakkēdam, are sanctified by special pūjā.

assumed their assigned places, the accused, bringing six bundles of betel leaves and 60 arecanuts from the Ilavāniyan, proceeds to the front (sannadhi) of Tekkēḍam passing through the Cempakarāman Manḍapa. To the east of the northern door of the Arikal by the side of the bell hung up, the accused takes his stand. Still further to his east, his personal attendants are to stand ready for any kind of odd service.

Then, the Bhaṭṭadiri formally ascertains whether the Nāḍuvāḻi Manuṣyams[40] and the relatives of the accused have arrived. When it is found that all of them are present, the Bhaṭṭadiri enquires of the Yōgam whether the accused can be called upon to present the betel leaves for the various members, (which means whether the formal procedure prior to the ordeal may be undertaken). This formal approval secured, the Bhaṭṭadiri calls upon the defendant to place 7 fanams, 6 bundles of betel leaves, and 60 arecanuts on the doorpost. When this is done, the Bhaṭtadiri's personal attendant takes the money and passes it on to the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar,[41] who receives the amount and checks it. Unsound coins, if any, are returned to the party with the command that they must be substituted by sound coins the next morning.

The Bhaṭṭadiri again asks individually the various members of the Yōgam, as also the accountant, whether the ordeal shall be held the next day, and when they agree, the Bhaṭṭadiri calls upon the accused to solemnly swear thrice to the effect that he is innocent and rings the bell once at the termination of the swearing.[42] Thereafter, he announces that, the next morning, immediately after the third round of Śrībali, the accused should be present in front of Vaḍakkēḍam with 21 bundles of betel leaves (with the stalks removed), 310 arecanuts, 28 fanams and a coconut. The Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar is also called upon to bring two copper cash (the smallest denomination of the Travancore coinage) and a small lamp. The accused is also ordered to abstain completely from any kind of cooked food on the day of the test; only tender coconuts and fruits are allowed; the usual food can be taken only after the ordeal is over. Issuing these instructions, the Yōgam disperses for the day.

40 'Nāḍuvāḻi' is ruler. Hence Nāḍuvāḻi Manusyams are representatives of the ruler.

41. It is stated in the ācārakkanakku that the money is actually dropped into Vattappalli's hands, the attendant taking care not to touch them.

42. It must be noted that at the time that the defendant swears in front of Tekkēdam, he is made to hold within the palm of his right hand, a sālagrāma bearing the symbols and features of Laksmi Narasimha.

The next morning, the accused, his friends and relatives, together with the Kōyima Manuṣyams arrive at the Cuṟṟumaṇḍapa (or the Śrībalipura). The Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri, reading out the Pampu once, asks the accountant of the Sabhai to have a copy of it taken. This done, the Pampu is handed back to the party. Then, the accused is taken to the Kailāsanātha shrine, and in the porch at its front, his hand is examined and its condition observed. By this time the Yōgam assembles in the Kārakakkaḻaka,[43] the rectangular space just to the west of the Dhvajastambha of Vaḍakkēḍam. There, to that spot, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar brings the big vessel for boiling the ghee, a silver lamp, a gold pitcher, two pots with spout, (kiṇḍis) one of gold and another of silver, a silver plate for holding the flowers, another silver vessel containing sandal paste and a Pūjapātram. He sees to it that various other sundry requirements like ghee, gingelly oil and coconut oil are brought to the spot. His assistant, the Palavēlakkāran, furnishes twigs for the hōmam and pūjā, dried sheaths of coconut palm, sand from the river-bed to be spread under the oven and other requirements.[44] When all these equipments are ready, the members of the Yōgam take their seats in the Kārakakkaḻakam in the under-mentioned order; on the northern side of the Kārakakkaḻakam at the Kannimūla sits the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri; near the pillar at the Kannimūla and to the north of it sits Sōmāśimaṅgalam and still to his north is Puttillam and farther north Araśila and by the side of the pillar to its east sits Mullamaṅgalam; to his east sits Kūṟṟampaḷḷi; still to the east Srīdharamaṅgalam; farther to his east is Vēliyara, while to his south, at the southern corner, sits Pudumādam. To the south of the latter, stands the accountant of the Sabhai. The Tēvāri who would have brought the pampu, the relatives of the accused and the Kōyima Manuṣyam are to stand to the south of the Kārakakkaḻakam. Should the accused feel it necessary, a paid servant of his may be permitted to stand at a spot to the east of Kārakakkaḻakam and just to the west of the balipīṭham.

After the various people assume their respective positions, the Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri ascertains whether all the individuals concerned in the conduct of the ordeal are come. Then he asks the members of the Yōgam, individually beginning from Puttillam in the order down to Mullamaṅgalam, whether the accused may be called upon to present the

43. Kārakakkaḻaka is the rectangular space to the east of the Vadakkēḍam Dhvajastambha This is the spot where the ordeal takes place.

44 Refer Chapter VII, p 203 regarding the position and function of Palavēlakkār

betel leaves, in other words, whether the ordeal may be commenced. When everything is found satisfactory and in perfect order, the command is issued to the accountant of the Sabhai to commence the proceedings.

The accused is called upon to produce before the Yōgam 21 bundles of betel leaves, 310 arecanuts, 26 fanams and two cash, as also one kiṇdi, a pot with a spout, for pouring water. Should a paid servant of the accused be available, he is allowed to place these articles before the Yōgam. The Bhaṭṭadiri once again ascertains from every member beginning from Puttillam down to Mullamaṅgalam, as also from the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri and the accountant of the Sabhai that the pampu is in order and drops the pampu into the outstretched upper cloth of the accountant. The coconut is passed on to the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar. The accountant, after securing the permission of every one of the members of the Yōgam, reads out the pampu. While he begins to read, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar breaks open the coconut before Indravālappan Piḷḷayār (Gaṇapati) ; there is also the injunction that the image of this Gaṇapati must be bathed in oil just prior to this.[45]

If there is any flaw in the structure of the sentence in the pampu and if such errors can be rectified on the spot, the correction is done immediately by any one of the persons who have accompanied the accused from his native village. After the corrections are duly entered the pampu is read out again by the accountant. Should it happen that the correction needed is so serious that it cannot be made there, the Pampu is to be taken back to the place whence it has been despatched and the mistake rectified by the Bhaṭṭadiri himself who had written the Pampu in the first instance. In that case, the Yōgam fixes the date and the month when the accused has to reappear at Śucīndram and disperses for the time being.

If there is no flaw in the Pampu, the rest of the procedure is gone through immediately. The Vaṭṭappapaḷḷi Paṭṭar, after showing the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri and obtaining his approval, pours three āḻāks[46] of ghee and three āḻāks of gingelly oil into the vessel placed on the oven and the fire is lit. Then the Paṭṭar, sitting in front of the oven, commences pūjā.

45. The Indravālappan Piḷḷayār is the image of Ganapati sculptured on the base of a pillar standing just to the south of the Kārakakkaḷaka. This Gaṇapati is also described as 'Sākṣi Gaṇapati' signifying that he is the divine witness to the Kaimukku ordeal.

46. Āḻāk = One eighth of a measure.

Meanwhile, arrangements are made with the subordinate of the Vaṭṭappaḻḻi Paṭṭar to take out a procession of the small golden image of Ṛṣabha, preserved in the temple. The procession starts from the Pūp-pura Vātukkal, and after making a round through the Śrībalipura, reaches the Kārakakkaḻakam. The vāhana or wooden structure bearing the Ṛṣabha is gaily decorated; further, over the Ṛṣabha, the silk umbrella is held like a canopy, while chāmarās are swung by a priest following by the side. During the entire time that the procession of the Ṛṣabha takes place, two Pāraśavas (the two eldest members of the employees of that class) are blowing the conch continuously. The sounding of the conch is continued uninterruptedly right up to the moment that the Ṛṣabha is passed on to the vessel on the oven.

Then the Pōppanē Bhaṭṭadiri, addressing the accused, asks him to proceed to the Indrapālanturai (i.e., the spring just to the east of the Indrapālavināyaka shrine) and have his bath there. The accused is also to change clothes; getting two newly washed clothes, he wears one around his waist and the other over his shoulders. After his return, he is not to be polluted by the touch of any one. Issuing the above-mentioned instructions, the Bhaṭṭadiri writes on a palm -leaf the deed of oath and the time-honoured verse employed on occasions of the ordeal. It runs as follows:

Āditya candrā vanilānalau ca
dyaurbhūmirāpō hṛdayam yamaśca
ahaśca rātriśca ubhēca sandhyē
dharmaśca jānāti narasya vṛttam.

The verse states that Sūrya (Sun), Candra (Moon), Vāyu (Wind), Agni, (Fire), Svarga (Heaven), Bhūmi (Earth), Water, Heart, Yamā (the God of Death), Day, Night, Evening and Dharma (Righteousness) constitute the fourteen witnesses of man's actions. The idea underlying the verse is that the natural agents mentioned therein are watching the Kaimukku and that it would be fruitless and, at the same time, a heinous crime to hide the truth from these omniscient forces.[47] The palm-leaf, containing the verse, is passed on by the Bhaṭṭadiri to the Vaṭṭappaḻḻi

47. It is interesting to notice in this connection, that on the maṇḍapa just above the spot where the ordeal takes place, there is an open space about 3″ square, which permits the sun's rays to pass inside, and is held that this has been particularly arranged for Sūrya, the Sun God, and presumably the other elements to be eye witnesses of the ordeal.

Paṭṭar, who, in his turn, fastens it to the cloth worn around the waist of the accused so that the palm-leaf touches his navel.

Meanwhile the ghee and the oil get boiled to a high pitch. Then, the leaves of 'mahiṣa' plant, and the bark of Iḷaññi (Mimusops Elengi) are thrown in, to test whether the boiling has reached the required stage as specified.[48] When the leaf and the bark make a cracking sound, it is an indication that the boiling has reached the required point. At this stage, the defendant is called upon to dip his hand into the boiling liquid and take out the Ṛṣabha seal. On doing this, he is led by the Śrībalipura one round and thence to Tekkēḍam, where, either the Bhaṭṭadiri or any brahmin representing him ties up his hand containing the Ṛṣabha Mudra with a freshly washed cloth. Thereafter, the accused is taken to the residence of the Bhaṭṭadiri and made to stay there.

Amongst the betel leaves and arecanuts placed by the accused, 27 bundles of betel leaves and 20 arecanuts are passed on to the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Paṭṭar. Soon after the plunging of the hand is over, any one of the younger members of the Yōgam takes his bath and, wearing fresh clothes, spreads the wet cloth near the place where the Sabhai had met. The Bhaṭṭadiri then takes 4 bundles of betel leaves and some arecanuts and places them on the cloth. Subsequent to this, the young Pōṟṟi distributes three betels and one arecanut to each one of the younger Pōṟṟis and also to the Mēlśāntikkār and Kīḻśāntikkār of the temple as well as to the Tēvāri who had accompanied the accused.

The rest of the betel leaves is distributed among the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri and the members of the Yōgam; even the accountant of the Sabhai is given his share of betel leaves and arecanuts. Three bundles of betel leaves and twenty arecanuts as well as the sum of 26 fanams are entrusted to the Bhaṭṭadiri. Out of this sum, 6 fanams are reserved by the Bhaṭṭadiri for himself, while 20 fanams are left with the Śrībhaṇḍārappaṭṭar or the person in charge of the sacred treasury.

On the third day, after the Śrībali processions are over at noon, the members of the Yōgam assemble at Tekkēḍam in front of the shrine. The servant, Palavēlakkāran, fetches the accused from the house of the Bhaṭṭadiri, and leading him by the southern entrance and taking him

48. That similarly the bilva or the pippla leaf in Malabār was employed for the identical purpose is mentioned by Forbes and Grose in their accounts of the Fire Ordeal—See K. P. P. Menon 'History of Kērala' Vol. II p. 263. Alberuni also refers to the use of a leaf in order to ascertain the degree of boiling, although he does not specify the name of the leaf employed for the purpose.

by the Arikal, reaches the front of Tekkēḍam.[49] Chanting mantrams, the Bhaṭṭadiri unties the cloth covering the hand of the defendant. If the hand is found free of any wound or blister, the Bhaṭṭadiri announces it. In that case, the accused is to bow before the deity and proceed to that ghat in the tank where he has taken his bathe before. Bathing there and wearing newly washed clothes, he reaches the Cuṟṟumaṇḍapa where the Śuddhapatram, or exonerating document, is executed.[50]

When the Śudhapatram is being written down, the Nāḍuvāḻi Manuṣyar, the Śrīkāryam Nambūdiri and the members of the Yōgam are all present. The Śuddhapatram is to be signed by the Bhaṭṭadiri and the accountant. On the Mēlśānti ascertaining from the accountant whether the Śuddhapatram is in order and whether it can be handed over to the party, the accused is summoned inside and the Śuddhapatram is delivered to him. Besides, the Bhaṭṭadiri warmly tells him that in the temple, food as well as Namaskāram i.e., cooked rice offered to the deity are available for him to partake. Further, the Bhaṭṭadiri suggests that during his stay, he may have his meals at the Illam (house) of any particular Nambūdiri, and finally he blesses him to lead a happy and peaceful life. The unjustly accused person is then allowed to offer worship as a free man, exonerated from all slur and stigma, and get Prasādam and tīrtha from the temple. The acquitted Nambūdiri has, however, to bear the cost of the betel leaves and arecanuts supplied earlier by the Ilavāṇiyan.[51]

If, on the contrary, the hand of the accused is found blistered or burnt, the Bhaṭṭadiri announces the fact and the guilt is confirmed. The victim is then led by the southern doorway of the Śrībalipura and thence to the Eastern street as far as the Kulaśēkhara Piḷḷayār temple[52] and left there. His fate is doomed; he becomes a social outcaste, and has thereafter to lead only a despicable existence.

49. The Ācārakkanakku of 909 M.E. (1734 A.D.), describing the procedure of Kaimukku, speaks of the southern entrance as the 'Southern Tower'. From this, one is apt to infer that there was a gōpura over the southern doorway in the earlier period. But there is no other documentary evidence or tradition to support it. Hence, it is likely that only the southern doorway is described in such grandiloquent terms as the southern tower. The term Arikal seems to indicate a pathway of stone. Even now there is one such leading from the southern Śrībalipura to Tekkēdam.

50. Appendix No. 8 for a sample Śuddhapatram.

51. There is no reference as to whether the amount he had paid to the Sabha was returned to him or not. Probably he was not given back the amount.

52. See No. 2 of Śucīndram Plan.

The Kaimukku records, now in the possession of Tekkuman Matham Pōṟṟi and the Vaṭṭappalli Sthānikar, reveal several entries recording the cases of Kaimukku ordeal conducted in the Śucīndram temple. They indicate the names of those who underwent the ordeal, the dates when they took place, as also the results of the trial. It is interesting to learn that, among those who were subjected to the ordeal at Śucīndram, some were found guilty and others 'not guilty' according as the hand of the accused was found blistered or free from hurt. In a few records, however, the results are not indicated. Since no Śudhapatram is found attached to those records, presumably they were cases of the hands having been burnt. The following is the list of ordeals, as found from the records.

1.	3rd Puraṭṭāśi	931 M.E. (1755 A.D.)	Result	— Not burnt.
2.	23rd Paṅgūni	979 M.E. (1804 A.D.)	,,	— Not specified.
3.	18th Alpaśi	988 M.E. (1812 A.D.)	,,	— do.
4.	27th Alpaśi	991 M.E. (1815 A.D.)	,,	— Not burnt.
5.	26th Tai	991 M.E. (1816 A.D.)	,,	— do.
6.	8th Vaikāśi	991 M.E. (1816 A.D.)	,,	— Burnt.
7.	25th Paṅgūni	998 M.E. (1823 A.D.)	,,	— Not specified.
8.	20th Āni	Year not specified	,,	— Not burnt.

SECTION 6. STRIKING INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH 'KAIMUKKU'

Certain interesting incidents associated with the conduct of the Kaimukku in the past are learnt from popular tradition, and a few of them, at any rate, have been corroborated by records in the possession of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar. They reveal the great sanctity attached to the Pratyayam and the belief in the mysterious intervention of the divine power in the adjudication of the guilt. But it is difficult to be too sure about the historicity of the incidents ; at best, they can be taken as events which have been believed in by generations of people.

One incident is particularly interesting. A Nambūdiri of Malabār, suspected of an illicit connection with a woman of his own community was sent to Śucīndram by the Bhaṭṭadiri of his village, with the Pampu and the royal nīṭṭu from the Travancore ruler. But, after reaching Śucīndram, he adopted a very strange attitude. Discounting the alleged association of divine sanction with the institution of Kaimukku, he contended that plunging the hand into boiling ghee would undoubtedly result in the blistering of the hand of any one, whether guilty or innocent. He challenged the members of the Yōgam to subject themselves to the

ordeal and prove their innocence. His argument was that if the divine intervention were true, he should be permitted to dip his hand into cold butter, and if, after the three prescribed days, his hand was to be found blistered, he was prepared to admit his guilt The members of the Sabhai were at their wits' end. Unable to meet his arguments and reluctant to take up the challenge he had thrown, they consented to adopt the course suggested by the accused. The Kaimukku was conducted. Every other detail connected with the ordeal was observed excepting the boiling of the ghee. The hand was dipped into cold ghee and oil, the mudra was taken out and the hand was tied around with a piece of cloth as usual. The procedure was gone through in a remarkably nonchalant and light-hearted manner by the accused. The members of the Sabhai had naturally imagined that whether the accused was really guilty or not, there was little chance for the truth to be assessed, for they thought that the usual form of kaimukku had not been observed. They were also apprehensive of the hoary kaimukku institution becoming discredited thenceforth.

On the third day, every one including the accused Nambūdiri, believing that the hand would be absolutely unaffected, appeared at the appointed time in front of Tekkēdam. The cloth tied around the hand was removed. Lo and behold ! the hand had become blistered and burnt. Every one, including the offender, was shocked. At once he admitted his guilt. He was ostracized from the community, and more than in the case of similar offenders, special odium was attached to his guilt, since he had dared to challenge the sanctity of an age-long institution. The date of this strange occurrence, as learnt from the records, is 8th Vaikāśi 991 M.E. (1816 A.D.). It is, however, difficult to say how far the details mentioned above are true.

Another strange occurrence, believed to have taken place in connection with Kaimukku ordeal, runs as follows :[53] One Nambūdiri, belonging to Cochin, was charged with the offence of adultery with a Nambūdiri woman, and he betook himself to Śucīndram, anxious to prove his innocence through the divine test. In fact, he was innocent of the accusation levelled against him, and perfectly confident that his purity would be proved, he readily submitted to the ordeal. The usual procedure connected with the Kaimukku was adopted with great care.

53. The details of this account have been learnt from a junior member of the Kūṛṛampalli illam.

But on the third day, when the cloth, covering the hand, was untied and the hand laid bare, to the utter dismay and astonishment of the defendant, the hand had blistered and pus was seen coming out. Mortified at this inexplicable turn, the indignant Nambūdiri flew into a temper and rushed up to the tower of the temple wishing to commit suicide by throwing himself down from the top of the tower. Just when he was about to take the leap, a mysterious voice was heard from inside the temple calling upon him to desist since there was only some irregularity in the taking of the vow at Tekkēdam before the ordeal. The mysterious voice further called upon Bhriṅgi, one of the ganas or devotees of Śiva, to save the innocent person. Before the defendant heard the divine call, he had taken the leap, but Bhriṅgi saved him in time before he dashed himself against the ground.

Another incident believed to have taken place, causing much surprise, occurred during the reign of the Travancore ruler, Śrī Svāti Tirunāḷ. Since the days when one accused Nambūdiri had demanded the use of butter for the dipping of the hand in connection with the Kaimukku, the changed practice was adopted in all the subsequent cases. Only ghee which was cooled down was mixed with the gingelly oil for the purpose. During the rule of Śrī Śvāti Tirunāl (1829-45 A.D.), an offender was subjected to the ordeal. But, on the third day, when he was taken around through the Śrībalipura, an acute burning sensation was felt by him in his hand, and unable to bear the excruciating pain, he dashed through the northern doorway which led straight to the Teppakkulam (tank) and plunged himself into the water. He was, no doubt, declared guilty and ostracized from the community. But this incident is said to have led to the adoption of certain drastic steps by the Mahārāja. First, that particular doorway through which the Nambūdiri accused in the above-mentioned case had rushed, was ordered to be closed.[54] What is far more important, the ruler, feeling that people were prone to abuse the

54. The patch found on the outer wall of the Northern Śrībalipura indicates the place where that doorway was located. But it is difficult to believe the popular version that the present northern doorway was erected only afterwards. Its location just facing the northern entrance of the Udayamārtānda Mandapa, the presence of the two sculptured Yālis opposite this doorway and also the fact that the Kāla Bhairava shrine, which ought to be visited by devotees immediately on entering through the northern door, is situated just to the east of the present entrance—all these support the view, that the existing doorway must have been as old as the Śrībalipura, if not older still. Hence the doorway, which had existed still further west and which was closed down after the occurrence of the incident narrated above, must have been an additional passage from the north.

sacred ordeal, ordered the discontinuance of Kaimukku at Śucīndram (1834 A.D.). His conviction was that faith was of the utmost essence for the proper conduct of these ordeals, and so long as the austerity and seriousness associated with the Kaimukku were not found in the same degree as in the days of old, there was no propriety in continuing it.

SECTION 7. DATE OF THE ORIGIN OF THE ŚUCĪNDRAM PRATYAYAM

The date of introduction of the Pratyayam into Śucīndram is one of the most difficult problems to settle. On the one hand, tradition claims that it was instituted in the Śucīndram temple at a very ancient period. Popular belief ascribes its establishment to Paraśurāma himself. Some hold that it was set up by the conjoint efforts of the early Cēra, Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya sovereigns. Others ascribe it to Mahōdaya perumāḷ,[55] who is said to have reorganized the social customs and institutions among the people of Kēraḷa.

On the other hand, all the Kaimukku records, so far available, pertain only to the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. The earliest evidence of a written document takes us back only to 802 M.E. (1627 A D.); a pampu dated 4th Karkaṭakam 802 M.E. has been found in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha. This being the only direct basis of information, other sources have to be sought for estimating the period of its first appearance in Śucīndram.

Some scholars are inclined to attribute to it an early origin on the basis that the Samskṛt poem, 'Śuka Sandēśam', alleged to be an early work, refers to the ordeal at Śucīndram. The 'Suka Sandēśam' contains the following stanza (No. 37 part I) relating to Śucīndram:

Śuddhisthānam kilabhagavatastad Śucīndram Mahēndra
syālakṣēdhah prathitamavanau mandiram candramauleh
yasminnadyāpica sadasatōh karmaṇōh sūkṣmayōh
vyālakṣantē bhūritanu bhritamātma hastē phalāni.

The verse can be translated as follows:

"Set your eyes upon Śucīndram, the world-famous abode of God Śiva, where Dēvēndra himself was purified. There, even today, the results of human actions, good or bad, however subtle, are observed on the hands of men."

'Suka Sandēśā', composed by Lakṣmidāsan Nambudiri of Kariṅgampaḷḷi, assumes the form of a letter or communication despatched from

55. See, for example, Kunjukkutta Tampuran's "Kēraḷam" Sarga 3 Verse 84.

Rāmēśvaram. It professes to mention the places of note, institutions and personalities flourishing in the region between Rāmēśvaram and Koḍuṅgallūr. The author describes the Pāṇḍyan kingdom under the name of Maṇalūr, speaks of Trivandrum and her Padmanābhasvāmy temple; but no king of that place is mentioned. The political importance of Quilon, however, finds a prominent mention. Between the Pāṇḍyan kingdom and Trivandrum, the only place specified is Śucīndram, with a reference to the famous ordeals held here.

It is contended by some that Śuka Sandēśam is a very early work on the ground that those places referred to by Śaṅkarācārya as very important, are not mentioned in the same order by the Sandēśam. If this line of argument has any force, then the Suka Sandēśam, and consequently the Kaimukku at Śucīndram would have to be attributed to a period far anterior to the 8th century A.D., the commonly accepted age of Śaṅkarācārya. This is, however, too fantastic a view. The slender fact that the Sandēśam does not describe the places in the manner that Śaṅkarācārya has done, and that, therefore, a long period must have intervened between the two, is a purely negative argument and carries little weight with it.[56]

The late Rāma Varma Mahārāja of Travancore, an erudite Samskṛit scholar, discussing the age of Suka Sandēśam, concludes that it should have been composed sometime between the 9th and 17th centuries A.D.[57] Vague as this conclusion is, it is helpful in fixing the upper limit of its date. Moreover, since the political importance of Quilon is described at length, the poem could not refer to an era prior to the 9th century A.D., before which, Kollam (Quilon) does not figure in epigraphy or literature as a prominent place. More definitely, it is assignable to a period anterior to the 14th century A.D., for the 'Uṇṇunīlisandēśam', which refers to 'Suka Sandēśam', is known to have appeared early in the 14th century.

But, since the Kaimukku at Śucīndram has been exclusively reserved for the Nambūdiris, it is very likely that it was introduced only after the establishment of Vēṇāḍ supremacy over the place in the 12th century A.D. Evidently, it was sometime subsequent to the advent of Gōvinda prajña bhiṭārar to Śucīndram that this Nambūdiri institution

56. One writer, Mr. Chidambarakurralam Pillay states ('Sucīndai Mānmiyam', p. 4 Foot Note) that scholars hold that Suka Sandēśam was composed over 175 years prior to the commencement of the Malabār Era i.e., before 650 A.D. But the basis for this statement is not clearly furnished by him.

57. J.R.A.S. 1884, pp. 401-403.

was set up.[58] Hence it may be ascribed to the 13th century A.D. or subsequent to it. There is a piece of evidence enabling us to fix the lower limit. On the ceiling of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, exactly over the Kārakakkaḻaka, there exists a small open space, two feet square. This is apparently provided in order to enable the Sun's rays to fall on the Kaḻaka, so that the Sun could be one of the witnesses to the ordeal. It is perfectly obvious that this open space was part of the ceiling of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa which was constructed in 1479 A.D. This shows that the Kaimukku was in vogue before 15th century. Therefore, the Pratyayam must have been established in Śucīndram sometime between 13th and 15th century A.D.

SECTION 8 OATHS AND PLEDGES

While the ordeal was confined to the Nambūdiris, the reputation that it acquired, was responsible for the administration of oaths and pledges at the temple by all classes of people. Theoretically, ordeals were closely related to oaths, the invocation of divine aid in the triumph of truth was common to both. If the curse which was to fall on the oath-breaker took effect at once, it became an ordeal. The idea underlying the oath or pledge was that a false utterance in the sacred precincts of the temple would be visited by Divine wrath in the form of a terrible calamity.

The exact manner of administering the oath in Śucīndram has not been known from any of the early sources. It is probable that the same process described by Fra Bartolòmeo as the one generally prevalent in South India was adopted here, too. He writes in 1796 thus : 'Oaths are always taken before the gate of a temple ; and the person who swears, places both hands on the head and invokes Mahādēva i.e., the Great God, the avenger, to punish him as a perjurer, if he violates the truth."

Tradition has it that many disputants in Nāñcināḍ had resorted to the oath at Śucīndram. Moreover, the reputation of the shrine in the matter of oaths and pledges had attained such a great height that even rulers resorted to Śucīndram for the purpose. The well-known instance is that of the Mahārāja of Cochin, Vīra Kēraḷa Varma, [59] who took the

58 Mr. P. Parameswara Sarma, the Vattappalli Sthānikar, thinks that the Pratyayam might have been in vogue even before the appearance of the Nambūdiris in Śucīndram. But the pledge taken by the Tantri and Śāntikkār not to break early traditions militates against that possibility.

59 Nagamiah State Manual, Vol I, p. 371.

solemn oath on the 12th Karkaṭaka 937 M.E. (1762 A.D.) The Cochin ruler sought the help of Rāma Varma, the Mahārāja of Travancore, against the Zamorin of Calicut. The Travancore king, aware of the breaches of faith on the part of the Cochin ruler in the past, insisted upon the condition that a pledge of good faith should be taken in the sacred temple of Śucīndram. His object was to introduce an element of sanctity to the pledged word. In the presence of the temple authorities and the officials of both the States, the Cochin ruler made a solemn declaration that he and his heirs would not engage in any act hostile to the interests of Rāma Varma. The striking fact is that, while there existed a number of temples near Cochin and Trivandrum, the capitals of the two States, the distant Śucīndram was chosen for the purpose.

This practice of swearing in front of the sacred deity was adopted also for the settlement of disputes or of rival claims to property. However, since the abolition of the Kaimukku in 1834 A.D., it has been decided by the Travancore ruler that even the lawful administration of oaths should not be undertaken by any one without the express sanction of the ruling sovereign.

CHAPTER XI

ARCHITECTURE

A study of the architecture of the Śucīndram temple is interesting, for it throws light on some of the distinctive architectural features prevalent in different epochs of South Indian history. The history of the temple reveals that its various structures owe their origin to different patrons and to different ages. Probably the Early Pāṇḍyas, and positively the Early Cōḷas, the Vēṇād Kings, the Cōla-Pāṇḍya Viceroys, the Later Cōḷas and Pāṇḍyas, the Vijayanagar chieftains, the Nāyaks of Madurai and finally the modern Travancore monarchs, have all had their share in the erection of the various parts of the pagoda. Wherever the dates of particular constructions are ascertainable, the architectural features of those periods may be noticed.[1]

It is by the study of the characteristics of particular South Indian temples that a scientific knowledge of Dravidian architecture and its evolution can be attempted. In fact, the history of architectural studies of South India leaves much to be desired. Regarding architecture and several other branches of study, South India has suffered from neglect at the hands of scholars. Indology has too often been restricted to a study of Hindustan (North India) only.

1 Facts mentioned in Chapters III and V are not repeated here. Particularly, measurements of the various structures furnished earlier, are purposely omitted from this Chapter.

Fergusson was the pioneer who undertook, nearly seventy years ago, a systematic attempt to interpret South Indian architecture as part of his monumental study of the Indian and Eastern Architecture. The difficulties of the subject were much greater then than they are now. Yet his work still occupies a leading position. For a considerably long period after him, no effort was made to pursue the subject further. Dr. Vincent Smith and E. B. Havell are among the experts of the present century, but the very wide scope of their studies precluded them from an intensive pursuit of South Indian Architecture. Not to speak of other minor works, among recent studies, the outstanding contribution has been that of J. Dubreuil. Fascinating and brilliant as his work is, it forms only a sketch and marks but a beginning. Moreover, the data of his investigations were much too limited. Percy Brown and Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy have tried to pursue the study further. But, doubtless, much more has to be done before anything like the evolution of Dravidian Architecture can be traced. Any attempt at assessing the growth of the South Indian styles of architecture is bound to be unscientific and incomplete without a thorough investigation of the architectural features of all the prominent temples of the land.

The study of the architecture of the Śucīndram temple serves another purpose, too. There are certain structures, the dates of which are not known directly through epigraphic or other sources. The architectural features may, in those cases, serve to indicate the probable period of their construction.

Garbhagṛha of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēdam The mūlasthāna or the garbhagṛha of the Sthāṇumūrty shrine and of Tekkēḍam Perumāḷ were among the earliest structures in the pagoda.[2] Let us notice the Vaḍakkēḍam garbhagṛha first. The inner-most cella enshrining the linga and the āvaḍaiyār (pedestal) is a rectangular space about 6 feet long north to south, and 4½ feet broad. It is enclosed by stone walls rising to about 6 feet. Of the same height, but very nearly 8 feet long east to west and 3½ feet wide is a passage leading to the cells. On the other side of the passage there runs the small raised dais presenting a row of tall and shining brass lamps. Immediately to the south of this passage is a room about 5 feet square, intended for keeping the materials immediately required for the pūjā.

2. True, the earliest nucleus of the temple was the shrine of Konṛayadināthar: but at present, no prominent structure is found there. A very simple unpretentious room houses the image of Konṛayaḍināthar. Perhaps, it is long after the pagoda rose to prominence that this structure was erected.

Proceeding to the back of the garbhagṛha by the narrow entrance on the north, we see that the garbhagrha and the Vimāna above it, bear a distinctly age-worn appearance. Looking at the details of the construction, we observe that the outer walls of the garbhagrha do not present all the elements of a later or modern temple of the Dravidian order.[3]

The pedestal, Ubapītam, is not seen; in this respect it resembles the Pallava temples. In the Aḍistānam, the Upānam, Padmam, Kumudam, Kaṇdam and Agrapaṭṭiyal appear as in the modern order. However, the Padmam is not so prominent as in later structures. It is noticeable that the Kaṇḍam has a number of projecting terminals of stone beams. Above the Agrapaṭṭiyal is the Stambham which presents the Vēdigai at its lowest base. The Vēdigai, however, does not have the indentations found on its modern counterpart. Above the Vēdigai, the Nāgabandham is conspicuous by its absence.[4] But, above the Kāl and below the Kalaśam, there is an ornamentation with floral designs. This decorative motif, it may be noted, appears in the Pallava temples. Over the Kalaśam is the Kudam, and at its top is the Palagai. Above the Palagai, no bōdigai is found; and, there is not even a trace of any corbel worth mentioning The corbel is merely constituted by a projection with a few indentations; in fact, it seems to belong to a type intermediate between the Pallava and the Early Cōḷa pattern. The prastaram is there; but the kabōdam does not have the kūdu.

The total height of the structure from the ground level up to the top of the stūpi is about 35 feet. On the Vimāna, or rather, on the lower part of it, which may be called Kaṛnakkūḍu, a chain-like ornamentation[5] is found descending from the *Stūpi* down to the Stambham. On the base of the Kaṛnakkūḍu, all around, appear figures in the shape of demons with protruding bellies and ghastly faces Presumably, they figure as guardian deities of the Mūlasthāna. At the middle of the western base is the figure of Narasiṁhamūrti, at the northern base

3. See Fig. 17 A — 'Modern Dravidian Order' in Dubreuil's "Dravidian Architecture".

4. Dubreuil indicates that the 'nāgabandham', as an ornament, did not appear till the 12th century A.D

5. Dr. Gravely draws attention to the fact that in the Vimāna in North India, a peculiar motif resembling the amalaka fruit, the stargooseberry or myrobalan, is repeated at regular intervals all the way up. ('An Outline of Indian Temple Architecture', p. 2.) The motif on the vimāna at Śucīndram resembles it, although no connection between the two is traceable.

Brahmā, and at the south Dakṣiṇāmūrti. The ravages of weather have left their marks on the outer surface of the kaṛnakkūḍu, the entire surface presenting a dark green colour. Against this background, the stūpi covered with gold sheet, shines all the more bright.

The Garbhagrha of the Tekkēdam shrine is practically a replica of its counterpart at Vaḍakkēḍam. On the front side, however, the additional room found to the left of the garbhagṛha in Vadakkēdam does not appear here. This garbhagrha is a rectangular room about 5 ft. by 4 ft. The outer walls of the Tekkēḍam Garbhagṛha present features almost similar to those in Vadakkēḍam. The only difference is that above the Agrapaṭṭiyal appear niches which correspond to those of the Early Cōḷa period.[6] However, the pilaster flanking the Śucīndram niche does not have below the kuḍam the kalaśam; on the other hand, it forms one undulated kāl.

The Vimānas of both Vadakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam are more or less of the same type. The Śikhara is very different from the usual Dravidian type, for here, the Kaṛṇakkūdu shows merely a slanting ascent from the prastaram right up to the stūpi. The chain-like ornamentation appears on the sloping surface of this Vimāna, too.

Though the similarity between the two Vimānas is striking, there are, no doubt, a few differences. The Vaḍakkēḍam Vimāna is nearly twice the size of that of Tekkēḍam; the height of the former is about 35 feet, while the latter is only about 20 feet. Further, the eastern or front part of the Vaḍakkēḍam Vimāna shows a huge kūḍu-like ornamentation with a prominent siṁhamukha. This feature is not found in the Tekkēḍam Vimāna.

In fixing the date of these two structures, the architectural features seem to corroborate the inference gathered from inscriptions. Both the constructions appear to belong to the 9th century A.D., i.e., to the period midway between the Pallava and Cōla epochs. The façades of Tekkēdam garbhagṛha, however, present a more refined pattern of workmanship than the corresponding parts of Vaḍakkēdam. Further, the niche on the outer wall appears only in Tekkēḍam. This suggests a slightly later date for the rise of Tekkēḍam.

The First Prākāra: The common corridor, the first prākāra, running round the two shrines, is distinctly of a later period than the 10th

6. See Dubreuil: 'Dravidian Architecture', p 45, Fig. 33(b).

century A.D. The pillars on the first prākāra have corbels of the later Cōḷa variety, and are very plain, with just one śaduram on each. It is, however, significant that the two pillars flanking the entrance of the Śucīndaperumāḷ shrine present the Nāgabandham ornamentation, which, according to Dubreuil, appears only in the 12th century A.D. The shrine of Śucīndaperumāl, as observed earlier, arose in all probability, about 1126 A.D. Thus, this feature seems to tally with the observation of Dubreuil.

Kailāsanāthar Kōil : The Kailāsa shrine on the rock seems to have arisen earlier than Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam. The architectural features constitute the principal basis for this conclusion. Situated on the eastern edge of a massive rock, this shrine faces west. The garbhagṛha is a small rectangular room, barely 4 feet long and 2 feet broad. The vestibule in front of it is another room of the same size. The doorways of both are hardly four feet in height, and they present little or no ornamentation. On either side of the door-post is a small pilaster (Stambham), which has at its top the palagai; but no bōdigai appears above it. Immediately below the palagai figure the kuḍam, kalaśam and kāl. The absence of bōdigai, even in the crude form appearing on the façade of Vaḍakkēḍam seems to confirm that the Kailāsa shrine was of an earlier date.

The Maṇḍapa in front of the garbhagrha is hardly six feet in height, and is supported by four pillars, two on either wing. The pillars themselves are modelled on the pattern of an early period. The corbel is similar to the Early Cōḷa type, while the capital is of the simple cubical variety constituted by two śadurams and one paṭṭam. The pillars lack polish and elegance.

The entrance to the Maṇḍapa is provided by a door on the southern wall. At present, there exists a portico or small pillared Maṇḍapa, (11′ 3″ by 5′ 9″) unenclosed on the sides. Beyond doubt, this portico is a later construction. The four pillars supporting this structure have corbels of the Vijayanagar pattern; the emerging bud of the flower is less developed than the puṣpabōdigai of later days. On the eastern and western faces of the pillars are carved two crouching lions, between the corbel and the palagai. Beneath the palagai is the munai which shows petals with a series of indentations. Still below are found the Kudam, tāḍi, kalaśam and then the kāl presenting floral ornamentation, and down below is the aḍistānam bearing sculptural representations of crouching lions.

The ceiling of the portico is a hollow umbrella-shaped structure. On the inner surface of the ceiling, stone beams which are shaped artistically like wooden supports to roofs, are found converging to a point. At the central spot is the representation of a lotus flower hanging down tapering to a point. The access to the porch is led by a flight of steps or sōpānam on the west. The balustrade of the sōpānam on either side is flanked by a sculpture of Śuruḷ Yāḷi.

The outer façades of the garbhagṛha present features which are not very different from those of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam. One difference is that the stambham does not have the Vēdigai. Just below the Kaṛṇakkūḍu there appear also Kūḍus at intervals. It is remarkable that Kūḍus present the Simhamukham at their top and the Gandharvamukham in the centre.[7] The five niches on the outer façades of the garbhagṛha (two on the southern, two on the northern and one on the eastern) are well shaped, and correspond more or less to the Early Cōḷa pattern.[8] The only difference is that in the hollow space inside the upper part of the niche, an image of Gaṇapati riding the mūṣika appears; in another southern niche is Dakṣiṇāmūrti, in the eastern niche Śiva, and in a northern niche Brahmā, while in another northern one, which is to the west of the former, appears a figure resembling that of Śāsta.

Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa : This pavilion has at its centre Nandi facing the deity. To the north-east and south-east of Nandi are found a pair of double pillars presenting corbels of the Vijayanagar pattern; the flower is shown as having just emerged. The bend that the corbel takes is neither natural nor gradual. According to the evolution of the corbel traced by Dubreuil, this pattern is assignable to a period of transition from the Later Cōḷa to the Vijayanagar type, *i.e.*, roughly the 14th century A.D. The Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa in the present form was constructed about 1239 A.D. Thus the architectural style corresponds to the deductions of Dubreuil.

The Ṛṣabha Maṇḍapa does not have any window on its walls. Often, large numbers of people crowd together in the small space and, from the standpoint of ventilation, it is defective. This feature is too common in South Indian temples and it has provoked adverse comments from the

7. The Kūdu is a foliated arch, common to South Indian temples. Some writers consider this ornamental motif to have been derived from the Buddhist caitya arch.

8. See Fig. 33 (b) — Dubreuil's Dravidian Architecture.

Western writers. The Abbe Dubois says:[9] "The low elevation, the difficulty with which the air finds a way through a single narrow and habitually closed passage; the unhealthy odours rising from the mass of fresh and decaying flowers, the burning lamps, the oil and butter spilt in libations; the excrement of the bats that take up their abode in these dark places, finally and above all, the fetid perspiration of a multitude of unclean and maladorous people—all contribute to render these sacred shrines excessively unhealthy." Though slightly overdrawn, the picture is unfortunately true in the main. But steps have been taken to mitigate the evils. There is the frequent burning of camphor which acts as a disinfectant. Further, so far as the Śucīndram temple is concerned, thanks to the steps adopted by the authorities, the bats have been dislodged. Moreover, in certain parts of the pagoda, which were dark, some stone slabs on the ceiling have been removed and in their place iron bars have been substituted.[10]

Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa: This porch is supported by six stout pillars, three on either side of the central passage. They have corbels projecting from the four faces of the pillars. In the case of two neighbouring pillars in the south, the projecting corbels on three sides have been removed. Evidently, the low height of the pillars and the short space intervening between them necessitated this step, in order to facilitate the free passage of people.

Examining the existing corbels on the northern pillars, we find that two of them present the *puṣpabōdigai* of a model just earlier than that of the full-fledged variety. The bud has emerged but is not shown drooping down after the later fashion. According to the deductions of Dubreuil, the corbels found in the Maṇḍapa are ascribable to the 15th century. This feature constitutes an incongruity, for this Maṇḍapa arose in the 13th century. Apparently, in the light of these features, the stages of evolution indicated by Dubreuil seem to demand an ante-dating.

The capitals of the pillars in the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa call for notice; there is a lack of uniformity in their disposition. The four pillars on the eastern half of the Maṇḍapa are of the 'bulbous variety'; beneath the corbel there is the kaṇḍam, palagai, idaḷ, kuḍam, tāḍi and kalaśam, below which is the kāl. The only member missing from a modern ornamental pillar is the padmabandham in between the kalaśam

9. "Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonials", p. 581. (Third edition).

10. This innovation deserves praise and may be imitated with advantage by other temples.

and the kāl In the ornamentation of the base of the four pillars, too, there is a variation. Each of the two pillars at the eastern extremity of the Maṇḍapa presents an elegant Yāḷi at the base. On the other hand, the base of each corresponding pillar on the west presents merely a crouching lion. The pillars on the western half of the Maṇḍapa, too, are of a very simple mould, they are with cubical capitals, the stems consisting only of śadurams and paṭṭams. These details are of interest because they serve to show that, in attempting to fix the age of particular constructions purely on the basis of such architectural features as the capitals and corbels of pillars, one should note that different forms may be shown at the same time, due to the whims of architects, financial considerations, etc.

The Tekkēḍam Maṇḍapa appears, in its architectural pattern, to be the same as that of the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa. There is the same lack of uniformity in the disposition of the corbels. Three rows of pillars on the eastern side have the puṣpabōdigai corbels and bulbous capitals, while those on the western wing have plain corbels with śadurams and paṭṭams on their stems. These circumstances serve to reinforce the suggestion made already that the Tekkēḍam and Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa were constructed by the same patron and about the same time.

Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa : The Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa has a rather imposing name, but its structure is simple and thoroughly unpretentious ; in fact, it is nothing more than a corridor. Inscriptional evidence suggests that the Maṇḍapa had its rise in the 14th century. But the pillars show features which were common in earlier epochs. The corbels are of the Early Cōḷa pattern ; and the capitals are of the simple cubical variety. Even the granite slabs constituting the ceiling of the Maṇḍapa are not very finely laid ; they have not been carefully polished or evenly fastened to each other.

The edges of the four sides of the ceiling, however, present a few cornices, and in their midst are found at regular intervals several kūḍus. These kūḍus also do not correspond to the pattern assessed to have been common in the pre-Vijayanagar or Later Pāṇḍya period. According to Dubreuil, after the Pallava epoch, it is only in the Early Cōḷa period that the kūḍu presented the Gandharvamukham inside. But in the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa in 24 out of the 56 kūḍus, the Gandharvamukha is clearly seen. Further, it may be added that in the kūḍus of this Maṇḍapa, the Siṁhamukha or the face of the lion at the top is strikingly similar to the Early Cōḷa type. But it is impossible to ascribe this

Maṇḍapa to the early Cōḷa period. The only conclusion possible is that even after the Cōḷa epoch, the Gandharvamukha inside and the Siṁhamukha at the top of the kūḍus continued to persist.

Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa : This is the most magnificent and imposing pavilion in the whole temple, displaying the finest architectural and sculptural workmanship. The ceiling of the huge Maṇḍapa is supported by four rows of pillars, two lining the southern side and two the northern. The pillars in front of the Tekkēḍam portion are smaller in size than the corresponding ones on the Vaḍakkēḍam part; but even the former are of considerable girth. Each one of the Tekkēḍam pillars is a tūn with a large cubical capital raised by a well-proportioned base called the *aśvapādam* and formed of three cubical parts called 'śaduram' and of two 'prismatic' parts with facets called 'paṭṭai'. In between the lowest śaduram and the immediately higher paṭṭam is the little ornament of nāgabandham. The two pillars at the eastern extremity of the Tekkēḍam portion are unique; they are most profusely ornamented by formations of small turrets and towers showing exquisitely minute carving throughout. They evoke more perhaps an admiration for the artist's skill than an appreciation of beauty. Indeed, it appears that the details have been overdone, producing a bewildering effect.

The Vaḍakkēḍam pillars are huge columns of a more composite character, because the main pillar has attached to it a double column of pilasters, each of which bears the bulbous capital. It is striking that the capital does not present the indentations called *munai* beneath the abacus or palagai; but only petals of flowers are represented. It is known that the munai or the indentations of the idaḷ appeared in other temples in the Later Cōḷa period. Why is it that, in a structure which unquestionably belongs to the 15th century, the munai does not appear ? However, much stress cannot be laid on this negative fact.

Far different is the case with the corbels on the pillars. They are all of the fully developed puspabōdigai type, which, according to Dubreuil, is a distinctive feature of the modern period commencing with 1600 A.D.[11] Here, too, the incongruity appears, and only the same explanation has to be offered. As in the case of the Udayamārtānda Maṇḍapa, Dubreuil's assessment of the evolution of the Dravidian corbel may have to be ante-dated by one or two centuries. Laying, as he does, so much emphasis on the history of the Dravidian corbel, which, he says "illustrates very well the meaning of the expression 'evolution of the

11. Dubreuil: 'Dravidian Architecture', pp. 40-41.

Dravidian Art' ", this modification of his chronological assessment is a matter of importance.

On the eaves of the ceiling of the Maṇḍapa are shown projecting stone beams carved in the pattern of wooden rafters or supports to a roof. This feature seems to be a relic of the wooden architecture of the past. On the eastern or front face of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, the eaves are ornamented at fixed intervals by ten huge kūḍus. But, unlike in the case of the normal kūḍu, the Simhamukham at the top is not seen. Another peculiarity is that, inside six of the central kūḍus, representations of turrets or towers are found intricately carved. The two kūḍus at the right extremity (in front of Tekkēḍam) present inside them, the sculptured figures of Gōpālakṛṣna and Bālakṛṣṇa, while the two corresponding kūḍus at the left extremity have Narasimhamūrty and Śiva Linga. On the northern and southern sides of the Maṇḍapa there are corresponding kūḍus, ten on each side ; but they are less ornamented, the central space containing merely floral designs.

The façades of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa present elaborate ornamentation, characteristic of the 15th century. Unlike in the case of Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam, the ubapīṭam pedestal is seen here. The aḍistānam and stambham also are appropriately represented. At regular intervals appear a number of niches which show more ornamentation in comparison with those on the façades of Tekkēḍam. The capitals of the pilasters flanking the cavity of the niche are of the bulbous variety. The corbels at the top of the pilasters have the puṣpabōdigai of the fully developed pattern. This circumstance confirms the suggestion made earlier that it figured in the Śucīndram temple by the 15th century itself.

Just below the niches is found a representation of lions and elephants alternating with each other. They are depicted as marching in procession. Immediately lower down is the narrow space containing a series of panels of bas-reliefs which portray interesting mythological episodes. Indeed, these panels constitute an excellent picture gallery in stone.

Ūñcal Maṇḍapa : This pavilion is known to have arisen by 1584 A.D. Its architectural features correspond to those common in the 16th century. The four main pillars which support the pavilion are unquestionably of a pattern common only subsequent to the 14th century A.D. The shafts of the bulbous capital as well as the corbels of the full-fledged puṣpabōdigai indicate their modern style. The linear carvings on the pillars are executed splendidly. In fact, the decorative motifs of the pillars in the Ūñcal Manḍapa present a remarkable similarity with

those in the Cempakarāman Mandapa, and perhaps were modelled on their pattern.

Over the stone pavilion, a Vimāna has been erected with brick and mortar. There is little doubt that this Vimāna is a recent structure. It presents an imposing appearance, rising to a height of about 47 feet from the ground level. Standing by the side of the great tower of the temple, this Vimāna appears only second in height to the Gōpura.

The shrine of Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar : Located immediately to the south of the Cempakarāman Maṇdapa, this shrine is known to have arisen in the 16th century. But, few of the distinctive architectural features of the age appear either on the vestibule or on the façades of the garbhagṛha. In fact, the corbels of the pillars supporting the vestibule, and the lack of any decorative motif on the walls might suggest that the shrine belongs to a much earlier date. However, this negative testimony should not be overvalued ; it is probable that, at later periods, too, structures were erected on the pattern of previous epochs, owing to financial or other reasons.

Citṛa Sabha : It is certian that the pavilion, called Citṛa Sabha, appeared before 1629 A.D. It is a magnificently designed structure. In fact, from the standpoint of the size of the edifice, the grandeur of the pillars and the sculptural representations, the Citṛa Sabha ranks second only to the Cempakarāman Maṇdapa. The size of the sculptured figures attached to the pillars of this pavilion is even much bigger. The architectural features of the pillars are more or less similar to those in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. But the pilasters attached to the pillars in the Citṛa Sabha do not bear the bulbous capital ; they are rectangular. The corbels are of the puṣpabōdigai variety ; but the drooping of the flower has not been so elegantly represented as in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa.

The shrine of Kaṅkāḷanāthar : This is situated immediately to the Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyaka shrine, and it is a small structure. The two pillars supporting the vestibule in front of the garbhagṛha have the cubical capital. The shaft of the pillar is divided into three patches, the two extreme ones being śadurams, hewn into rectangular units and the middle one showing only a small portion at the four sides chiselled in the shape of an elongated petal of a lotus. Excepting this, absolutely no ornamentation is found on the surface of the pillars. The corbels are of the Early Cōḷa type. The façades of the walls of the garbhagṛha, too, present no ornamentation whatever ; only a slab of stone projecting

slightly more than the rest of the surface is found at regular intervals. A similarly raised layer is seen at the top and the base of the outer walls. The kūḍus on the eaves of the Maṇḍapa also seem to be of an old pattern; the siṁhamukha at the top and the gandharvamukha inside are but faintly noticeable. There is no doubt that they form products of an inferior order of carving on stone.

Recently, the Vimāna above has been completely recast with brick and mortar. The fact that a total re-construction of the vimāna was found necessary suggests that the Kaṅkālanāthar shrine belongs to an early period. In fact, the architectural features, considered along with the pattern of the bronze image inside, seem to leave no room for doubt regarding the early date of the shrine. But, none of the records prior to that of 1819 A.D. mentions it. Hence the date of the shrine has to remain an open question in the present state of our knowledge.

The Śrībalipura shrines : Equally difficult is the problem of ascertaining the date of the shrines located in the Śrībalipura. The Cēravātal Sāsta, the Rāmasvāmy and Kālabhairava shrines have strikingly similar architectural features. They are as plain and simple as the Kaṅkāḷanāthar Kōil; they do not have even the vestibule in front. The outer surface of the walls enclosing the garbhagṛha, too, presents little ornamentation. Only raised layers or paṭṭams are found at regular intervals along the surface as well as at the top and base of the granite walls.

All the three shrines are surmounted by Vimānas of stone, which are, however, too big in size in relation to the size of their garbhagṛhas. The Vimānas have all around their façades, sculptures of gods interspersed by representations of pavilions. The Vimānas in all the three cases present a less worn-out appearance than the shrines themselves. Unquestionably, the Vimānas are later constructions.

The determination of the age of these shrines is difficult because of the paucity of distinctive architectural features characteristic of particular epochs. Unless it is assumed that merely out of considerations of economy or of simplicity the architects constructed the shrines after earlier patterns, they have to be ascribed to the Cōḷa period, sometime in the 11th or 12th century A.D. But it is extremely doubtful whether at such an early age, the 'Pirattē Śīvelipura' had been constructed. All that can be said is that sometime before the 15th century A.D., when an old Śrībalipura is known to have existed, these shrines might have arisen. The Vimānas of these shrines, rising almost to the height of the

Śrībalipura, were either re-constructed or set up for the first time about 1798 A.D.

The Aramvaḷattamman Kōil: Different is the case with the Aramvaḷattamman Kōil. It is definitely known that it arose soon after 619 M.E. (1444 A.D.). The structure of the shrine, though small and rather simple, shows features similar to those of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, which belongs to the 15th century.

Two pillars flank the two extremities of the vestibule in front of the shrine. They have only cubical capitals, the shafts being divided into śadurams and paṭṭams. But the corbels are decidedly of the puṣpabōdigai variety; they are almost similar to those appearing in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. The façades of the shrine do not, however, show the same elaborate ornamentation of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. In fact, in this respect, the features of the Aramvaḷattamman Kōil resemble those of the Śrībalipura shrines. It is obvious that, because the erection of the Aramvaḷattamman shrine occurred through the endowment of a private individual, the cost would have been limited to a moderate amount. That apparently explains the comparatively inartistic pattern of the façades of the shrine.

The Vimāna was renovated recently, in 1930 A.D. Unlike in the Śrībalipura shrines, however, the new Vimāna has been built of brick and cement. Artistically shaped figures of saints and devotees adorn the different sides of the Vimāna. However, the Vimāna of cement does not seem to harmonize with the granite structure of the shrine.

Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine: Known to have arisen in 413 M.E. (1238 A.D.), it could have furnished valuable data regarding the architectural features of the age. But the garbhagṛha, the small vestibule and the Māṇḍapa in front, do not present architectural peculiarities worth the mention. The two pillars at the two extremes of the vestibule are of the paṭṭam and śaduram variety. The corbels are of Later Cōḷa pattern. This confirms that, so far as the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy shrine is concerned, the style of the corbel corresponds to the evolution suggested by Dubreuil.

The pillared porch running in front of the vestibule appears to have been constructed in the 16th century. The group of four pillars on either side presents śadurams and paṭṭams. At the top of the śaduram appearing on the base of the pillar, we find the nāgabandham ornament. The faces of the śadurams show nicely carved floral designs. But the corbels of the pillars are only of the Later Cōḷa variety.

Doubtless, the small portico in front of the Maṇḍapa seems to have been constructed in the style common in the 16th century. Two pillars flanking the entrance to the portico have been carved in a style conspicuously different from those in the inner Maṇḍapa. In the first place, the corbels of the easternmost pillars are of the fully developed puṣpabōdigai pattern. Moreover, the pillars of the portico have very exquisite carving. Besides the skilfully executed śadurams and paṭṭams presenting minutely worked belts running around the middle of the śadurams, a number of elegantly sculptured figures adorn the faces of the pillars.

It is noteworthy that the inner surface of the ceiling is dissected into 9 squares formed by slender beams of stone running across each other. In the square at the centre is sculptured the figure of Subrahmaṇia, seated on the peacock. The other eight squares contain uniform sculptures of Śiva seated on the bull.

However, the corbels of the pillars do not show the same finish or picturesqueness as those in the Śrībalipura. The probability is that this particular porch was constructed sometime between the 15th and 18th centuries A.D.

The Jayantīśvara shrines : Here again, the date of the construction of the shrines, at any rate, of the chief among them, is definitely known. The shrines of Jayantīśvarattu Īśvara and Dēvī were built in 768 M.E. (1593 A.D.) The other shrines of the group arose probably about that time or soon after. There is a striking similarity in the pattern of all the shrines in the group.

The pillars supporting the portico in front of each shrine present the cubical capital. It is remarkable that the corbels are all of the Early Cōḷa variety. The faces of the pillars in the portico in front of the Jayantīsvarattu Mahādēva shrine presents more of ornamentation. But the corbels of these pillars too, are of the Early Cōḷa variety. It is thus obvious that, as in several instances noticed already, here too, the architects did not adopt the style current in that epoch ; the earlier patterns were adopted. This deviation is an all-important consideration to be remembered in attempting to determine the age of particular structures.

The Garuḍāḷvār shrine : This is an exquisitely constructed pavilion, open on the sides. Four splendidly carved pillars support the pavilion. Besides the excellent portraits which the pillars present at their bases, the shafts themselves are skilfully ornamented. Further, the bulbous capital is found in the most highly developed form. The corbels, too, present the full-fledged puṣpabōdigai. Dubreuil has shown that the

bulbous capital in conjunction with puṣpabōdigai corbel were distinctive characteristics of the 17th century.[12] So far as the Garuḍālvār shrine is concerned, this confirms the assessment of the age of its construction, for the sculptures inside indicate that the shrine was erected by Tirumala Nāyak in the 17th century.

Vasanta Maṇḍapa. Another splendid monument of architectural skill is the Vasanta Maṇḍapa, which is ascribed by tradition to the 19th century. This pavilion, too, displays excellent workmanship. But, from the architectural point of view, it is ascribable even to the 17th century A.D. In fact, the four pillars at the corners, supporting the pavilion, bear a remarkable resemblance to those of the Garuḍāḷvār shrine. The artistically carved floral decorations on the shafts, the bulbous capital and the puṣpabōdigai corbel are all common to both.

A skilfully executed piece of architectural sculpture adorns the ceiling of the pavilion. The whole space is intersected into a number of square patches by slender beams of stone running across each other. The squares present small but elegantly carved figures of the Navagrahas (planets). At the centre are found three square patches bearing the figures of Śiva on the bull in the middle, and of Vināyaka and Subrahmaṇia at its right and left respectively. The eaves of the ceiling are shown as resting on shafts of stones which resemble wooden rafters. This appears to be quite a common feature of decoration in South India. In the Śucīndram temple, a considerable number of porches, belonging to various epochs beginning from the 12th to the 19th century A.D., presents it.

Śrībalipura: The extensive corridors running around the main structure of the temple form a colossal feat of architecture. They are products of modern workmanship, for the Śrībalipuras, excepting the Eastern one, were constructed by the end of the 18th century. The Śucīndram Śrībalipuras are smaller in length than their counterparts at Rāmēśvaram, Madurai, or Tirunelvēli, but they are more compact and suitably proportioned. The flooring, plastered decently with cement right through, has a smart appearance. It represents a striking contrast to the pavement of haphazardly fixed stone slabs in the corridors of temples like the Tirunelvēli Nelliyapparkōil.

The columns in all the Śrībalipuras except in the Eastern one are excellently carved. Located in a long range at regular intervals on either

12. Ibid., p. 43.

wing of the corridor, the pillars present a delightful array. Attached to the main shaft and carved out of the same monolith is a pilaster. The pillar and the pilaster bear admirable floral designs on the sides. The aśvapādam or the base of the column is itself executed with skill and grace. While the main pillar contains śadurams and paṭṭams presenting either floral designs or bas-relief sculptures of gods and occasionally obscene representations of sexual interest, the pilaster has in its lower portion, the figure of a lampbearer. At the top, the pilaster has the kalaśam, tāḍi, kuḍam, idaḷ, and palagai poised over the palagai of the pilaster, and at the top of the main pillar is the finial of the huge capital over which is represented as crouching a ferocious-looking lion. The corbel with the fully developed puṣpabōdigai furnishes the finishing touch at the very top.

While the pillars, described above, adorn the Southern and Western Śrībalipuras and the major part of the Northern Śrībalipura, the eastern half of the latter presents still more elegantly carved pillars. The additional embellishment is partly provided by the pilasters attached to these pillars. Here the pilasters are of the bulbous capital variety. Besides, the faces of the pillars bear splendid sculptures of gods and goddesses.

The 'obscene' element in the art Several of the pillars in the Śrībalipura show representations of sexual appeal. Obscene and unseemly, they form an inexplicable feature in the art of the pagoda. But this element is common to many other Hindu temples in India. Several explanations are offered in order to account for this phenomenon. It is said to have been intended to ward off the evil eye on the artistic excellence of the pagoda. It is suggested that the ephemeral nature of sensuous pleasures of the body is depicted through these sculptural representations, so that the more lasting pleasures of attaining god-head may be impressed on the visitors. Others maintain that these figures attract the voluptuous to the temple and ultimately serve as a means of drawing them to holy thoughts. On a more rational basis rests the suggestion that these figures are intended to warn the worshippers against the snares and pitfalls which befall the seeker after truth. A more ingenious explanation is offered by Mr. L. Shenoy.[13] He holds: "The Hindu mind has never regarded the act of procreation as a thing obscene; and since religion is so inextricably mixed up with the Hindus' work-a-day life, every physical act is given a religious significance." A more scientific approach has been made by some writers who think that the sexual

13. Lasrado Shenoy: "Madura — Temple City".

impulse inborn in living creatures must have bewildered early man. And, not able to secure a proper explanation, he might have associated it with divinity.[14]

None of these seems to provide the real clue. They appear to be more ingenious than convincing. Some Purāṇic basis might have existed at the outset justifying such representations in the temple. Later, artists working on the basis of that foothold, could have given free vent to their imagination. Perhaps the original justification is found in the Agni Purāṇa. One of the texts relating to the choice of a site for a temple or a shrine, suggests that the best site is one where loving couples, human or animal, have lived, loved and bred and reared a family.[15] Is it likely that, when, as we find in the case of cave shrines, the architects were compelled to select sites which were not sanctified by the love of couples, the artists sought to remedy the defect by picturing on the shrines the effigies of loving couples ? Later the sculptors may have adopted very strange and perverse freaks. Among the numerous representations under this category, one is significant. On the southern face of a pillar in the Western Śrībalipura is found the figure of a ṛṣi or yōgi who holds aloft a Śiva linga enshrined in the āvaḍai, while his left hand holds his genital organ. Clearly it does not seem to be an aimless freak on the part of the sculptor ! Whatever the genesis and rationale behind it, one cannot but remark that the practice does not fit in with common ideas of public decency. It is desirable to have these representations effaced.

The Musical Pillars (Plate No. 4): At the western end of the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa in the Northern Śrībalipura stand the four 'clustered columns' of pillars, known as the 'Musical Pillars.' The two southern groups contain 33 shafts, and the two northern 24 shafts in each. These columns evoke a twofold admiration. As pieces of architectural skill, they are wonderful, for each of them is exquisitely carved out of monoliths into stylobate, clustering columns, and huge turrets at the top. The stylobate, or the common base on which the columns stand, is itself most elegantly executed with intricate carving. Further, each one of the shafts presents an octagonal shape at the bottom and circular shape above. The turret at the top is a very imposing and masterly piece of stone-carving. The corbels, overhanging at the top, are the full-fledged puṣpabōdigai, elegantly poised.

14. Hartland : 'Primitive Paternity', Vol. I, p. 152.

15. See the article on "The Mithuna in Indian Art" by T. Bhattacharya — "Rupam" of January 1926.

One wonders whether these clustered columns, so numerous and varied, have all been carved out of a monolith or were formed by fastening together separate shafts. The latter view seems to be the correct one at first sight. But, however carefully one searches for the connecting links or the joints of the shafts, they are not to be seen. Unless some mysterious device of linking them together has been adopted, it must be taken that the entire group of pilasters is carved out of a monolith.

The outward architectural merits of these columns apart, they are admirable for their musical properties, too. Each shaft yields a musical note when tapped lightly, and the note arising from each is different from that of others. It may be observed that the difference in sound is not so clear as in the case of the 'Musical Pillars' of certain other South Indian temples. Nevertheless, it forms an admirable product of skill.

The Gōpura : Unlike other famous temples of South India, the one at Śucīndram possesses a single tower only, at the eastern entrance of the pagoda.[16] It is known that the original gōpura was constructed by 1545 A.D. and that the tower above the plinth was renovated in 1888 A.D. If the earlier superstructure was as lofty as the present one, which seems to have been the case, it shows how a feature distinctive of the Later Cōḷa epoch, appears at Śucīndram so late as the Vijayanagar period.

But it must be urged that too nice a discrimination cannot be made in the matter, for, though the Vijayanagar age was pre-eminently an epoch of grand maṇḍapas, yet, the same period also saw the rise of lofty gōpuras. In fact, the tendency of the Later Cōla period to erect imposing towers as at Cidambaram and Jambukēśvaram continued during the Vijayanagar era also.[17]

Several European art-critics have taken exception to the Dravidian style which has lofty gōpuras at the entrance, and, leading through smaller structures, ultimately reaches a small and unpretentious cell. Following Fergusson, L. Moore, a former civilian of Madras, has condemned this feature of the South Indian temple thus : " As one goes on into the first enclosure, the gōpuras look fine, and the general appearance of the buildings is striking ; but, they lead up to nothing, and the centre of the building is mean and uninteresting ".[18] This view sounds strange.

16. The Śilpa Śāstras prescribe the erection of a Gōpura also at the southern entrance, while those on the north and the west are optional.

17. It has to be remembered that the distinctive architectural features of an earlier age were not confined to that age only.

18. A. V. Thiyagaraja Aiyar : " Indian Architecture ", p. 49.

In the sphere of art, as well as in the domain of social customs and institutions, it must be remembered that there are no absolute criteria of judgment. What may appear to be strange or abhorrent to a particular community or nation may be the most venerated feature to another. Music affords the most striking example of this. Thus, it is not surprising that Western writers, accustomed to their style of architecture, fell foul of the Dravidian ideal. In the Christian Churches, the holiest place is covered over by magnificant domes, spires or towers, while the outer entrance is made insignificant and unpretentious. That explains, though it certainly does not justify, the criticisms of certain European writers.

Other European art-critics, like E. B. Havell and Percy Brown, have realized the need for an orientation of the attitude. Havell says in his 'Ideals of Sculpture and Painting': "No European can appreciate Indian art who does not divest himself of his Western prepossessions, endeavour to understand Indian thought and place himself at the Indian point of view." Percy Brown, too, is perfectly right when he states: "The intellect of the age, absorbed in divine contemplation, is reflected in the temple ideal, where the spiritual dominates the material."[19]

But, while the Hindu spiritual outlook has justified the erection of stately towers maintaining the heart of the shrine in the same unpretentious scale of old, it does not seem that, to start with, the Hindus deliberately designed this proportion of these structures. Some Indians have employed the spiritualism of the Hindu to explain the origin of this architectural feature. For example, A. V. Thiyagaraja Aiyar says that the promotion of spiritual contemplation was the primary object of the builders of the Hindu temples, and hence, the sanctum sanctorum was so formed as to provide scope for undistracted meditation.[20] Obviously, while this accounts for the small size of the Garbhagṛha, it provides no explanation for the existence of the lofty gōpuras at the entrance of the temple. In truth, the gōpuras were later constructions in most cases. At any rate, there is definite evidence that the tower in Śucīndram arose centuries after the cella was constructed. How then is it justifiable to explain the small size of the sanctum in relation to the gōpura as if it was purposely designed even at the outset ?

Further, it is not in every case that the loftiest part of the temple was located at the entrance. For example, in Tanjāvūr, Dhārāsuram,

19 Percy Brown: 'Indian Architecture', Vol. I, p. 73.

20. A. V. Thiyagaraja Aiyar: 'Indian Architecture', Vol. II, p. 51.

Gaṅgaikoṇḍacōḷapuram and Tṛibhuvanam, the huge Vimāna over the sanctum takes the place of the tower at the entrance. In fact, as Percy Brown points out, these variations are to be explained by the prevailing ideals of particular periods.[21]

Studying the details of the structure of the tower, we notice that the granite base of the gōpura is 3 feet in height, 90 feet in length and 60 feet in width. Thus, it occupies an area of about 5,400 sq. ft., and has a volume of 16,200 c. ft. The doorway in the middle is 36 feet long, 10 feet broad and 24 feet high. The entire plinth surface presents a marvellous workmanship in stone.

The base of the structure resembles the Aḍistānam of a shrine. Certain sections of the Aḍistānam of the Gōpura show elaborate workmanship, for instance, the Upānam bears three roll cornices of delicately carved stone work. The top line of the highest of these cornices presents the padmam. The kumudam runs prominently above this. A narrow concave space, about six inches in width, runs above the Kumudam. This space contains miniature sculptures of the lion alternating with the elephant. The entire retinue is represented to be on march.[22]

The top of this narrow space forms the base of the niches which are found at regular intervals. On all the four sides of the gōpuras, there are altogether 65 niches, each one containing the sculpture of a god or goddess or occasionally of a Purāṇic scene. The ornamentation of the niche is not far different from that of the Later Cōḷa epoch, as found for instance, on the east Gōpura at Cidambaram.[23] But the pavilion over the niche is less prominent than the corresponding member of the Cidambaram Gōpura. Moreover, there is a lack of uniformity in the number of kalaśams on the top of the pavilion. Some have five kalaśams, while others have just one at the centre. Yet another difference noticed is that the kūḍus appearing above the niches present clearly the siṁhamukha at the top and floral designs inside. In the case of the kūḍu of the Later Cōḷa variety the Siṁhamukha is not seen ; thus, the kūḍus on the Śucīndram Gōpura conform to the pattern of the Vijayanagar epoch.

21 Percy Brown : 'Indian Architecture', Vol. I, pp. 102-103.

22. The origin of this motif of animals at the base of the Gōpura, as also of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, is perhaps ultimately traceable to the Pallava period. In 'Draupadi's Ratha' at Mahābalipuram the same ornamentation figures.

23. See Illustrations — 'Architectural *Motifs*' — Fig. III.

Flanking the two sides of the niches are carefully carved pilasters of the bulbous capital variety, showing all the ornamentations of a stambha of the modern type. In the case of these pilasters the puṣpa-bōdigai corbel is executed on three sides, one on the right, another on the left and a third in the middle, projecting to the front.

At the top of the pavilion is the tip of a roof-like projection with kūḍus at intervals. Over this line of kūḍus a repetition of niches and the allied ornamentations noticed above recur, but on a much bigger proportion. The niches are taller and wider but contain no image inside. In the intervening space between the niches are found splendidly carved kumbhapañjarams like flamboyant pilasters.[24] The nature of this ornamentation is indicated by its name. At the base is a vase-like (kumbha) decoration, and it is surmounted by a pañjaram or pilaster. The role of the kumbhapañjaram is purely decorative. At the top of the kumbha-pañjaram and the adjoining niches appears a continuous layer of projection of stone roofing, with kūḍus at regular intervals. That takes us to the highest level of the granite portion, and above that stands the rising superstructure of brick and mortar.

This upper edifice, rising in a series of zones or tiers, diminishing in width as they ascend, is pyramidal in shape. The average angle of slope from the vertical is 25°, and the width at its apex is about one-half of its base. The profile given to the Gōpura silhouetted against the sky, presents on either side a curve as it were, which is most pleasing to the eye. The pyramidal shape is maintained through its seven galleries until at the top, it ends in a barrel-shaped surface stretching horizontally. The seven kalaśams or stūpis, all of the same size, each about 5½ feet high, and fixed equidistant from each other, add lustre to the entire tower.

Conclusion: The architecture of the different structures in the Śucīndram pagoda shows the features current in the various epochs. True, in several instances, the characteristics repeat in succeeding ages too, and sometimes raise posers for the student of history. At any rate, they afford help in fixing the upper limit of chronology of particular constructions. It is important that some of the stages in the evolution of the Dravidian corbel as indicated by Dubreuil demand further consideration in the light of the new facts. This circumstance points to the need for an intensive study of the architecture of all prominent South Indian temples.

24. See Illustrations — 'Architectural *Motifs*' — Fig. III.

CHAPTER XII

SCULPTURE

The Śucīndram temple, like several others of its kind in South India, is a treasure-house of varied types of sculpture. They are found in different parts of the pagoda; and they belong to different epochs. Of these, by far the most numerous and splendid products are the sculptures of the gods and goddesses. But the sculptor has employed his skill in depicting other subjects as well, though they mainly serve as auxiliaries to the religious themes.[1] The various kinds of sculpture in the pagoda may be broadly classified into those of (1) Natural Scenery; (2) Floral designs; (3) Animals and Birds; (4) Human figures; (5) Portraits of kings and eminent personalities; (6) Gods and Goddesses.

SECTION 1. NATURAL SCENERY

It must be admitted that the sculptors in the Śucīndram temple, as in most South Indian temples, have paid comparatively less attention to the portrayal of natural scenery. Sculptures depicting lovely scenes of forests, hills, valleys, rivers or the natural phenomena are rare, and even when they appear, they have not been executed for their artistic value. To that extent, 'art for its own sake' is not the ideal kept in view. In

1. E B. Havell "Indian Sculpture and Painting" p. 26 ". It is the Indian conception of divine beauty which gives the key to all Indian aesthetic thought."

the Śucīndram temple natural scenery is found sculptured, only in a few places. In connection with the delineation of the scenes of the Rāmāyaṇa on the sides at the top of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, several panels present forest scenery. Rāma's combat with Tādaka, the wanderings of the royal party in the forest, the adventures in and around Kiṣkinda, Sīta's imprisonment in the Aśōkavana are some of the themes which depict thickly wooded forests.[2] These have been portrayed with remarkable skill.

Again, on the façades of the Cempakarāman Mandapa the panels present a continuous array of bas-reliefs depicting themes from the life of Krsna and the consummation of Valli's marriage with Subrahmania. In the representation of these themes, occasionally, forest scenery is depicted. But in all these cases, a few hillocks are shown rising one above the other, with clusters of trees in patches. It cannot be said that they present a realistic appearance. The sculptor's attention does not at all seem to have been at its best in the portrayal of scenery. The course of a flowing river is shown in depicting the scene of the crossing of the river Yamuna by Nandagōpa.[3] This has been done with a certain measure of skill; even the fish in the river have been clearly shown.

Trees bearing flowers and fruits are sculptured in several places; but, almost invariably, they have been sculptured in a rather indifferent manner. The trees lack their naturalness. Whether it is in connection with the delineation of the Rāmāyaṇa, Kṛsna Līla or Vaḷli's marriage, the same unfortunate feature persists. Particularly striking is this artificial characteristic in the representation of the tree in the sculpture portraying the emergence of the Sthāṇu linga from the cluster of bamboos. Equally inartistic is the sculpture of a tree at which a Yakṣi is seen leaning. Both these pieces appear in panels in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. Even a casual observer feels that the leaves, buds, flowers and fruits could have been sculptured in a more naturalistic and effective manner. While the difficulty of carving natural scenery on stone is not minimised, it is unquestionable that greater care would have improved the attempts.

2. The whole range of reliefs defies photographing since they are pitched so high from the ground level and since the crowded array of figures has been frequently white-washed presenting a blurred view.

3. See Panel 3—Southern Façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa.

That the sculptor can achieve it if he cares to represent natural scenery effectively, is seen from the panel depicting Tirivikrama[4] It is a skilfully executed piece. The sky and the clouds are depicted in a perfectly naturalistic manner. This panel shows that if the same attention had been devoted to the sculpturing of scenery as of the gods and goddesses, undoubtedly, the temple would have presented remarkable specimens of sculpture depicting Nature's charms.

SECTION 2 FLORAL DESIGNS AND ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE

While natural scenery failed to receive the necessary attention, artistic ornamentation by means of lineal carvings was not neglected. This decorative motif, however, appears only after the 14th century A.D. The Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa is the earliest to present on the edges of the pillars, as also on the ceiling above, exquisite lineal carving and floral designs. On the ceiling, designs in the pattern of the wide-opened lotus flower, and other pictorial drawings are carved In recent times, they have all been painted with suitable colours, producing a pleasing effect.

The Garuḍāḷvār shrine of the 17th century is, chronologically, the next structure exhibiting linear carving of a high order. Definitely more elaborate and intricate than in the case of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, the designs here, are more admirable. Though tending to excessive ornamentation, it has not become grotesque. The pillars of this shrine present lineal carving of the first rate variety, while the ceiling at the top shows the design of the lotus flower.

The Śrībalipura[5] of the 18th century, too, is noted for the lineal carving on the edges of its pillars. Though the designs are slightly less intricate and dexterous than those in the Garuḍālvār shrine, they are none the less artistic. The latest specimens in the temple are found in the Vasanta Maṇḍapa and the Nāṭakaśāla, both of the 19th century A.D. The lineal carvings on their pillars and the floral designs on their ceilings are quite clear and impressive. The artistic merit of their workmanship is superb. Indeed, one is inclined to think that the skill of the sculptor in this type of work has not suffered with the lapse of time. While sculptures of images have become stiff and conventional in later epochs, this tendency has not vitiated lineal carving. But, when all is said, it

4. See Plate No. 24.
5. Plate No. 3.

has to be admitted that carving of lines is less difficult than the sculpturing of personalities and scenes; it calls for less of intuition and ingenuity and more of mechanical skill. Once the original design is carefully planned and executed, the others of the same series have only to be imitated. Nevertheless, it demands patient attention to details.

Wood-carving.—Lineal carving and architectural sculpture are at their best in the specimens of wood-carving in the temple. Carving in wood is a speciality of the West coast; the pagodas in the Malayāla Dēśa and the palace at Padmanābhapuram present some of the best specimens in the whole of India. While most of them belong to the middle ages, the wood-carvings found in Śucīndram are all of recent times, not earlier than the latter half of the 19th century. Lineal carving and floral designs of a marvellous type are found on the rafters and wooden pillars within the interior of the Gōpura. The decorative frontage now furnished to the shrines of Rāmasvāmy and Citra Sabha also show intricate, if also slightly grotesque, patterns on account of their excessive crowding of details. It is definitely known that these items of wood-carving were undertaken by expert carpenters of Ceṅgannūr in North Travancore.[6]

SECTION 3 ANIMALS AND BIRDS

Sculptures of animals and birds appear in various parts of the temple. They have been introduced in their appropriate places either as vehicles of particular gods and goddesses, or in a few cases, purely for the sake of their decorative value.

The Yāḷi is, by far the most ubiquitous animal, the sculptural representation of which dominates South Indian Temples. The Yāli is more an imaginary than a real animal;[7] it appears to be a compound of the lion and the elephant. Essentially modelled like a lion, the Yāli bears, in addition, the proboscis of the elephant Much too long for the size of the possessor, the proboscis invariably reaches down to its feet, when the Yāḷi is shown in its characteristic rearing pose. In fact, almost always the Yāḷi is depicted in the rearing pose, grasping the overhanging trunk with its uplifted front feet. Not infrequently, the rampant Yāḷi has its proboscis entwined with the uplifted trunk of an elephant, seated at the feet of the Yāḷi. Strange bed-fellows indeed!

6. See Presidential Address on "Kērala Art and Culture" by A Gopala Menon —Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference 1937.

7. The Yāli is believed to symbolize the sacred river Ganges.

The Śucīndram pagoda has its complement of Yāḷi sculptures. The more prominent pairs of Yāḷis at the base of the pillars flanking the entrances are seen in the Nāṭakaśāla, the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa and the raised terrace facing the northern doorway of the pagoda. In all these cases, the rampant awe-inspiring Yāḷi is represented as trampling underfoot the submissive elephant which raises up its trunk to meet that of the aggressor.

The Yāḷi, as a decorative motif, seems to have been evolved from the lion. It is very likely that the transition appeared as early as the Pallava epoch. While the lion is shown as a pillar-base in the Mahiṣāsura Maṇḍapa of about 650 A.D., in the Shore temple which was constructed about half a century afterwards, a rampant lion, in prominent relief, is shown as standing erect. The Yāḷi seems to be a creation of the Dravidian imagination. In the Śucīndram pagoda it figures earliest in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa as a pillar-base. Thus, by the 13th century A.D., it appeared ; thereafter, in the succeeding eras, it assumed an ever increasing popularity.

Lion :—The lion, as such, is rarely sculptured in the standing pose. Both the sculptures where it appears in that pose are in the niches of the Gōpura base ; one as the vehicle of a goddess and another as the 'lord of the forests', as it were, in the Gōvardhana scene of Kṛṣṇa. The lion in the lying pose on the top of pillars with its array of protruding teeth, wide-opened jaws and fierce look, is a common feature.[8]

It seems that, after the appearance of the Yāḷi as a decorative motif at the base of the pillar, the lion was given a lift to the entablature at the top. In the Śucīndram pagoda, the lion resting on the top of the pillar appears in the latter half of the 15th century, and has held its own since then. However, on the columns of the 18th century and of later days, the lion becomes more conventionalized, and presents an appearance midway between the tiger and the lion. Nevertheless, the decorative object is excellently achieved ; more so, on the long range of pillars as in the Śrībalipura and in the Nāṭakaśāla.

Elephant :—Sculptures of elephants are found frequently in the different parts of the temple. A long row of elephants and lions alternating with each other is depicted as basement mouldings just above the aḍistānam on the façades of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa and the Gōpura base. The elephants, pictured to be 'guarding' the steps to the

8. See Plate No. 3.

Citṛa Sabha and the row of elephants on the present balipīṭha of the Citṛa Sabha, have been spoken of already.

The bas-reliefs of the façades of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa depict the elephant in scenes like 'Gajēndramōksa', 'Vaḻḻitirumaṇam', anointing of Śivalinga by the elephant, and 'Gajalakṣmi'. Besides, on the faces of pillars in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa and Śrībalipura, the elephant figures as the vehicle of Indra. In front of the Indra Vināyakar shrine, there appears a tiny elephant carved in stone. On the whole, the sculptures of elephants have been executed with good effect.

Horse :—The horse, on the other hand, figures rather rarely in the sculptures of the temple. It is only where chariots are depicted that the horses appear. In two cases where the Viśvarūpa of Lord Kṛṣna is shown as Pāṛthasārathi, the horses attached to the chariots are shown.[9] Clearly, the horses form an insignificant part of those elaborate sculptures, and hence, inadequate attention seems to have been devoted to their carving ; at any rate, they do not constitute first-rate specimens of sculpture.[10]

Bull :—The bull is one of the most familiar animals sculptured in Śaivite temples. The bull, lying in the characteristic pose before the diety, is found in no less than five places in the pagoda—in front of the Mūlasthāna, of the Kailāsattu Mahādēvar, of the Kaṅkāḷanāthar and of the Aṛamvaḷattamman and Indravināyakar shrines. Except the bull in front of the Kailāsattu Mahādēvar shrine, the others have been sculptured well, great attention having been paid to their pose. Besides these, on a number of panels in the Gōpura base, as also in the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa, sculptures of Śiva and Pārvati on the standing bull are seen, but they have not been executed well. The god and goddess are shown in high relief, while the bull is on low relief, with the result that the carving of the latter lacks elegance.

Cow :—The cow has been represented just in a few places where Vēṇu Gōpāla playing on the flute is sculptured.[11] The cows by the side of Vēṇu Gōpāla in the Citṛa Sabha and Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa are shown as being enthralled by his enchanting play on the flute. In all

9. See Plate No. 26.

10. It is striking that the horse plays such a small part in the sculptures of Śucīndram, while in the temples of Gujarat for example, it is far too common. See p. 122 "Archaeology of Gujarat" by Sankaliya.

11. It is, however, to be noted that a panel on the Gōpura base and another in the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa presenting Vēṇu Gōpāla do not depict the cows.

the cases where the cow is sculptured in this context, especially at the entrance to the Citṛa Sabha, it has been done well, and the cow's joy and admiration are vividly brought out in its facial expression. On a panel on the southern façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa this scene is depicted most exquisitely; the cub of a tiger is seen sucking the milk of the cow, and yet the latter, immersed in Kṛṣṇa's music, is seen unperturbed. Herds of cows are shown in connection with the representations of the boyish pranks of Gōpālakṛṣṇa who tends the cattle.

Buffalo :—The buffalo is depicted but once, as the vāhana of Yama, the god of Death, in connection with the illustration of the Mārkaṇḍēya story found on the northern façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. But, it is not a satisfactory representation of the buffalo. Its striking muscular strength and its proverbial calmness are not clearly shown.

Monkey :—The monkey, on the other hand, is sculptured skilfully in several places. Naturally in the illustrations of the Rāmāyaṇa on the sides of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa ceiling, they figure. Besides, in cases where the tree has had to be sculptured, as in portraying Yaksiṇis either in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa or Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, stray monkeys are shown perched on the top. On the ceiling of the Gōpuravātal Maṇḍapa, very near the sloping eaves, as also on the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, at intervals, monkeys sitting on their hind legs, and preparing to take their leap, are depicted skilfully; they figure there merely as decorative sculptures.

Dog :—The dog appears as the Vāhana of Kālabhairava and is found in the shrine dedicated to that deity in the Śrībalipura, and also in another sculpture of the same god shown on a pillar in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa and a third in a panel on the north Gōpura base. It may be mentioned that in none of these cases is the sculpture of the dog carved with grace. With the tail indicated in a conventional curvature and the body shown straight and long, a certain degree of stiffness and rigidity mars the natural appearance.

Cat :—The cat figures but once, i.e., in connection with the sculpture of Kṛṣṇa Līla on the southern outerwall of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. Bāla Kṛṣṇa adroitly steals butter, and a cat close by, obviously a rival in the field, keeps watching warily, and Kṛṣṇa makes a 'generous' gesture by throwing a part of his booty to the less fortunate aspirant.[12]

12. See Panel No. 5. Southern Façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa.

Here, the theme is vividly represented; but the cat is sculptured in a very unsatisfactory manner. Carved in low relief, the distinctive features of the cat are not brought out; indeed, it is more the context rather than the sculptural representation that makes a cat out of the figure.

Squirrel—A squirrel appearing to worship a Śiva linga is an odd piece of sculpture, found on the easternmost panel of the northern outerwall of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. The significance of the theme is not known. It may be added that the sculpture of the squirrel is of a rather inferior order. Perhaps the limitation of space in the small panel is responsible for this circumstance.

Mouse :—The mouse is a far too familiar creature figuring in the sculptures of the temple. It occurs as frequently as does Gaṇapati, who has the mouse as his vehicle. It is really a surprise that Gaṇēśa, particularly remarkable for the generous proportions of his physical frame, should have had the tender mouse as his vehicle. Be that as it may, in the sculptural representation of Ganēśa and his Mūṣika Vāhana, the disparity in size is markedly seen. Most striking is this feature in the case of the prodigious images of Gaṇapati in the shrines of Nīlakanṭha Vīnāyakar and Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar.

Deer :—The only other animal appearing frequently as a sculptural representation is the deer. Wherever Śiva is depicted with four hands—and such sculptures are many in the temple—the deer is represented as one of Śiva's symbols held in his left back hand. The particular pose accorded to the deer is enchanting. Held in between the first two fingures of the god are the hind legs of the deer, which is depicted as taking a frolicsome leap forward into the air throwing up its front legs. Invariably such representations of the deer have been executed with rare skill and taste; particularly remarkable is this when it is remembered that the deer in such contexts is sculptured on a very miniature scale.

The full-sized deer is represented in one context. It is in the portrayal of the birth of Vaḷḷi, shown on one of the panels of the northern façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. But it is difficult to consider the sculptural representation of the deer in this panel as satisfactory. The distinctive qualities of the deer like tenderness, innocence and agility are not expressively brought out in the sculpture.

Snake :—The snake, by virtue of its sacred associations with some of the gods of the Hindu pantheon, cannot certainly be missed in the sculptures of the temple. A full-sized cobra is represented in the

portrayal of the scene of 'Pālāḻimardanam' depicted on a panel of the façade of Cempakarāman Mandapa and another on the Gōpura base. A snake is shown as held by Kṛṣṇa in the sculpture in the Ūñcal Mandapa.[13] Besides, wherever Garuda is sculptured, snakes are depicted around his arms The sculptures of Kaṅkālanāthar, for example in the Citra Sabha,[14] or the Gōpura base, present the snake coiling around the waist of Śiva. Kṛṣna in the 'Kāliyamardana' scene on the façade of the Cempakarāman Mandapa, has to deal with the powerful snake in the height of its vigour; but the piece of sculpture is not of a high order. The snake is not depicted in the animated style that it ought to appear in the context Slightly better is the case where Visṇu is shown seated along with Lakṣmi on the coils of Ādiśēsa (the serpent-god), the majestic hood of the latter serving as the canopy for the divine couple. Both in the sculptures at the Gōpura base and in the Alaṅkāra Maṇdapa, the snake has been represented with a certain measure of elegance. But the coils are found to be rigidly and artificially formed.

Birds :—Birds, too, have been sculptured in their appropriate places as vāhanās of certain gods. The mayūra or peacock, the vāhana of Subrahmania is found in several parts of the temple, one in the Subrahmaniasvāmy Kōil itself, another in the niche on the southern wall of the Citṛa Sabha, a third on a pillar in the Alaṅkāra Manḍapa and a fourth on a panel of the eastern Gōpura base. Of these, the first two are elegant sculptures of the peacock; particularly, the small peacock on the panel of the Citra Sabha is carved splendidly. The elegance of the pose of the peacock and the grace of its wings, spread fanwise, are charming.

The most unsatisfactory specimen of the 'Mayūra' sculpture is that on a pillar of the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa. Carved in low relief in between Subrahmaṇia himself and the background of the pillar, it has not been vividly portrayed. But the inherent difficulty in sculpturing a bird, and the Mayūra at that, in between the image and the background of the pillar, must not be underrated. Yet, more or less, the same difficulty is present in the case of the Mayūra on the panel of the Gōpura base; but it has been carved well.

Far more difficult than the peacock for the sculptor to carve is the swan, and it has been done exquisitely in the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, as the

13. See Plate No. 9.
14. See Plate No. 11.

vehicle of Rati. Not only have the details been executed skilfully and in their appropriate proportions, but the pose of the bird to suit that of the energetic rider has been presented splendidly well. It looks sprightly and life-like. The wing is gracefully spread fan-wise at its back.[15] On the face of a pillar in the same Maṇḍapa, the swan bearing Rati is sculptured, but it is on a very miniature scale, and its artistic quality is not remarkable.

The dove figures as a decorative element over the shoulders of Rati, as also over Manmatha. They have been sculptured fairly well ,[16] but, since they form only complements to the main piece of sculpture, they have not received at the hands of the artist the attention they deserve.

The only other bird, worth mentioning, is the crane, which, however, figures but once. One of the feats of Kṛṣṇa was tearing the mouth of a crane which had evil intentions against him. And this act of Kṛṣṇa is depicted in one of the bas-reliefs on the façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa.[17] It is carved well. The writhing pain of the bird and its desperate struggle to save itself, are portrayed effectively.

SECTION 4. HUMAN FIGURES

Numerous sculptures of human figures are found in various parts of the temple. Most of them are feminine lamp-bearers. They are found on either side of the doorways of the shrines and on the two wings of the pavilions and porticoes of the pagoda. By far the largest number of the lamp-bearers is seen attached to the pillars of the Śrībalipura.[18] It need hardly be stated that the long-range view of these uniform figures produces a pleasant effect. Each one of these figures is about 4 feet tall and is found in an upright standing pose holding in between the two outstretched hands, a hollow receptacle for holding oil and wick. These figures are sculptured with care and skill showing their well-marked features. The attenuated waist, the prominent busts and the thick-set arms and legs, together, present an attractive appearance. Even the drapery is artistically sculptured.

15. Plate No. 8.
16. Plates Nos. 7 and 8.
17. See section 2 of Panel No. 8 of the Southern Façade of the Cempakarāman Mandapa.
18. Plate No. 3.

There appear many sculptures of saints and devotees on the faces of pillars in various parts of the temple. It is not possible to identify them, for no inscription or any other source is of help in this matter. In Sucīndram, we do not find the sixty-three Saiva saints sculptured in stone. The figures appearing on the faces of pillars in the Śrībalipura, Nāṭakaśāla etc., represent a class of devotees and not particular persons. Some are shown seated in the padmāsana pose, engaged in meditation, while others are in the standing pose with hands clasped in anjali. The flowing beards in certain cases, the clean-shaven heads in others, the garlands of beads in their hands in still others, mark them out as devotees. It is remarkable that some of these personages sculptured on the pillars of the Śrībalipura are represented in obscene or voluptuous pose.

Several devotees are shown lying flat on the floor and offering perpetual prayer to the deity. Carved in low relief, these figures appear in almost every part of the temple. By the side of these devotees are found inscriptions indicating their names and stating that they are performing sadāsēvai or eternal worship. It is believed that people ailing from chronic diseases, get relief by having their own figures carved in such a pose.

SECTION 5. PORTRAIT SCULPTURE

(a) *Portrait Sculpture of a king in Citṛa Sabha :* The third pillar on the eastern row of the Citṛa Sabha presents very probably the portrait of a king. The figure, 4 feet in height, is shown standing on a chariot drawn by horses. His right hand below the ankle is found mutilated; perhaps, it held a sword. The left hand is shown resting on his left thigh. The facial features are sharp and well-marked; a pair of moustaches is also shown. The ear-rings are long, stretching down to the chest; this appears to be similar to the feature common to early West Coast figures. The head-dress, rising up to a foot, is elegant; but it does not present intricate carving as those on the figures in the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa.

To the left of the principal figure stands a servant or page, 2½ feet in height. He has his right hand raised up to his mouth, appearing to keep it closed in reverence for his master, while his left hand passes over his clothes so as to prevent them from moving. These features suggest that he is an attendant.

To the right of the central figure, on the northern face of the pillar, is a small one about 2½ feet high, shown in an obedient pose. In his outstretched right hand, he holds an unidentifiable article. The left hand is held fast to a ring, projecting from the pillar. He, too, has ear-ornaments descending down to his chest. It is notable that he has the tuft of hair tied up right in front of his head, after the orthodox Malayāli fashion.

To the left of the above-mentioned figure, on the northern face of the pillar itself, stands a soldier about 2½ feet in height, holding a sword and shield. The sword is not held aloft, but is poised on the shield which is held by the left hand, resting on his chest. This soldier, too, has ear-rings coming down to his chest, and the tuft of hair is found made into a knot on the front part of his head. All these features clearly indicate that they are Malayāḷi attendants and that the principal figure represents a monarch. But it is by no means easy to ascertain the name of the king. Perhaps he was the Vēṇād ruler who had the Citra Sabha constructed.

(b) *Portraits in the Garuḍāḷvār shrine :* There are four groups of portraits, one around each of the four massive pillars supporting the pavilion of the Garuḍālvār shrine. Of these figures, the one attached to the pillar in the south-west corner seems to represent a royal personage along with his relatives and companions. The king holds aloft in his right hand an unsheathed sword. The elaborate ornaments adorning him, the dagger and spear stuck up into his belt, his majestic pose, all mark him out as a person of high position. Evidently, he was the person who constructed the Garuḍāḷvār shrine.

Immediately to his left is the figure of a woman, rising to the height of his chest. His left hand is shown holding the outstretched right hand of the woman. To her left, i.e., on the southern face of the pillar is another woman, of a still smaller height. Further to her right, i.e., on the eastern face of the pillar is the figure of a man almost of the same height as the principal personage in the group.

The identification of these figures has encountered difficulties. Popular tradition, which holds that they are the portraits of Tirumala Nāyak and his wife, seems to be correct. Other known portraits of Tirumala present the same feature of being shown along with two women by his side, one his wife and the other probably an attendant. For instance, the portrait sculptures of this Nāyak king in the Pudu

Mandapa at Madurai and another at the Śrīvilliputtūr temple present him in the company of his queen and of another woman, apparently an attendant. True, the Madurai and Śrīvilliputtūr statues show the paunch of Tirumala more prominently than the Śucīndram sculpture. It is probable that the Śucīndram portrait represents Tirumala while he was younger.

The abundant jewellery adorning the king and the queen is a feature common to all these portraits. The sculptures of this king at all the three places show clearly the nāma, the Vaiṣṇava caste-mark. More striking is the common feature that there is no head-dress; the lock of hair is made into a tuft poised at the left-side of the head.[19] But the ear-ornaments in the Śucīndram sculpture differ from those seen in the Madurai, Tirupparaṅkunṟam, Aḻagarkōil and Śrīvilliputtūr figures. In the Śucīndram portrait, the ear-ornaments stretch from the ear-lobes down to the shoulders; in all the others, the ear-ornaments are much smaller and descend down to the chin only. The same difference is noticeable in the case of the ear-ornaments of the women, too.[20]

Considering the features of the Śucīndram statue, and the age to which it could have possibly belonged, the only other person who may be thought of as capable of being identified with it, is Viṭṭhala of Vijayanagar. Viṭṭhala constructed the Gōpura to the back of the Garuḍāḻvār shrine. The great devotee of Viṣṇu that he was, he might have erected the Garuḍālvār shrine. If that were the case, the portraits found inside it might well be those of Viṭṭhala and his relatives. But many of the known portraits of Vijayanagar kings and generals present the head-dress, ear-rings and drapery in a form distinctly different from that at Śucīndram. Moreover, the tradition of the place that the Śucīndram statues represent Tirumala Nāyak and his relatives cannot be brushed aside as baseless. The fact that Tirumala furnished the gold mask for the Viṣṇu image at Tekkēḍam is an additional support.

There is no doubt that the artistic quality of this portrait is of a high order. The anatomical features are exquisitely chiselled, and the appearance of the king and his consort is remarkably graceful. The

19. Tirumala Nāyak's broad jaw, well-developed shoulders and his strong well-formed legs are features resembling those in the other known figures of the King. See the article by Father H Heras in Q.J.M.S., XV, pp. 209-18.

20. Perhaps this is a local variation. The portraits of the kings in the Kulaśēkhara Mandapa and Citra Sabha present the same feature as the portrait in the Garuḍāḻvār shrine.

various jewels have been admirably delineated on stone. Even the veins running on the feet are clearly shown. The formation of the nostrils is done skilfully, the cavity of each nostril extending to the ear on its side.

Attached to the pillar on the north-west corner of the Garuḍāḷvār shrine (facing Tirumala Nāyak) is shown a man standing with his hands clasped in anjali. Probably, he is a relative or an officer of the king. Immediately to his right, stands another man facing west; he is turning towards the person on his left and is seen handing over to him a small roll, apparently of betel leaves; his left hand is perhaps having the *'adappai'*, a tiny bag which holds betel, arecanut, etc. On the eastern and northern side of this pillar, no figure is represented; thus, this relative or officer of the king is left with only a single attendant.

By the side of the pillar on the north-eastern corner of the terrace is the standing figure of a man, facing south as anjalihasta. Immediately to his right, facing east is another attendant, though the latter is not shown as an 'aḍappaikkāran' handing over betel to his master. Symmetrical to the above, some figures are sculptured by the side of the pillar on the south-eastern corner. The principal figure in this group, facing north, adopts the anjalihasta pose. But the accompanying figures are strange; the one to his right is probably an attendant depicting an obeisant attitude, while to the back, facing south, is shown the figure of Hanumān. To the right of the latter, facing west is a devotee with a flowing beard and depicted as offering prayers. The only explanation for the presence of these persons is that they are also devotees of Viṣṇu and of Garuḍa. Apparently, the principal figures attached to the three pillars are portraits of relatives or officers of Tirumala.

The excellence of the whole group of sculptures is striking. Though the most exquisitely carved sculpture is that of the royal personage, evidently Tirumala Nāyak, the others are by no means of poor quality. They present the same elegance and finish; however, less of jewels appear on the other persons than on the king. It is unfortunate that it is not possible to identify all the members of the group. An estimate of the sculptures as portraits is impossible without this identification. As pieces of sculpture, however, the entire group is of a high level.

(c) *Portrait Sculptures in the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa:* The Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa, stretching northward from the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi Maṇḍapa, contains two elegant sculptures, evidently of royal personages.

Each of them, together with its accompanying figures and decorations, is carved out of a monolith, which serves as a pillar of the Maṇḍapa.

The figure sculptured on the western pillar is in every respect the more important one.[21] The exquisitely carved crown on his head, the unsheathed sword held aloft in his right hand and the scabbard clasped in his left, tend to show that the sculpture is the portrait of a monarch. This statue on the the opposite side, facing the former one, resembles it in several respects. However, the portrait on the east appears to be that of a subordinate or a relative of the ruler, as is clear from his anjalihastam.

Different views have been expressed regarding the identity of the two portraits. Mr. A. S. Ramanatha Aiyar, the Travancore Epigraphist, holds that the bigger of the two statues (i.e., the western one) represents Bālarāmavarma who was ruling Travancore about 1761 A.D. and who came to Śucīndram when his contemporary, the Cochin Raja, took a vow of loyalty to Travancore. He adds that the smaller statue represents Bālarāmavarma's nephew and successor, another Bālarāmavarma.[22] The grounds for his identification are, firstly, a traditional report which associates the two statues as representing one Rāmavarman and his nephew, and secondly, the fact of Bālarāmavarma's visit to the temple in 1761 A.D., when the Cochin ruler took the pledge. Now, both of these grounds, by themselves, form inadequate data.

Mr. T. G. Aravamudan, while quoting Mr. Aiyar's view in partial approval, suggests that the bigger statue represents Rāmavarma who ruled from 1700 to 1725 A.D.[23] This surmise is obviously based upon the tradition quoted by Mr. Aiyar; no other ground is advanced by him.[24]

Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai has, in his revised State Manual,[25] reproduced the photograph of the bigger statue and has chosen to name the king represented by that portrait as Udayamārtāṇḍavarma (1516-1535 A.D.). Not a word has, however, been mentioned by him in support of this identification. Should it be imagined that the location of the

21. Plate No. 36.
22. T. A. S., IV, pp. 112-113.
23. 'Portrait Sculptures in South India', pp. 58-59.
24. In his later book 'South Indian Portraits in Stone and Metal', p. 6, he assigns the date of the ruler to 1761 A.D.
25. T. K. Velu Pillai: State Manual, Vol. II, p. 170.

statues by the side of Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa is a pointer in that direction, it may be recalled that the Maṇḍapa acquired its appellation after an earlier monarch of the same name.

Mr. Parameswara Sarma, the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar of the temple, is inclined to hold that the bigger statue represents Rāmavarma (1458-1479 A.D.) and the smaller one Mārtāṇḍavarma Śrī Kulaśēkharaperumāḷ, a junior partner of the former ruler. There is a considerable measure of plausibility for this view on account of the following grounds. These portraits are situated just to the north-west of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, and it is certain that Rāmavarma was the architect of this pavilion. Further, Mārtāṇḍavarma Śrī Kulaśēkhara-perumāḷ is, as learnt from an inscription, credited with the construction of the bathing ghat in the Teppakkuḷam attached to the temple It is but appropriate that these two famous patrons of the pagoda should have desired to immortalize themselves by erecting their portraits within its precincts. Moreover, the dress, jewels and weapons seem to belong to a period earlier than the 18th century A.D. Again, the fact that the place where these portrait sculptures are found is called Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa, probably after the junior ruler, seems to reinforce the view.

But, despite all the above-mentioned circumstances, the information furnished by a palm-leaf record of the temple gives the lie direct to the earlier suggestions, and helps to settle the identification of these portraits. The record, dated 6th Māśi 974 M.E. (1799 A.D.), states that Saumi Nārāyaṇappayyan had contributed a sum of money for the construction of one of the pillars of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa. In that case, it is certain that the portraits which form part of the two pillars of the Maṇḍapa were set up about 1799 A.D.[26]

If this conclusion is correct, as it seems to be, the senior king whose portrait appears on the west, may be Rāmavarma Kārtikai Tirunāḷ (1758-1798 A.D.). This pious ruler was reputed for his solicitude for the Śucīndram temple. He visited the pagoda no less than seven times, as the records testify. Since, by the time of the completion of the Kulaśēkhara Maṇḍapa and its component parts, Kārtikai Tirunāḷ had

26 It is inconceivable that one pillar alone was constructed in 1799 A.D. and the others at some other time. And equally unthinkable is the idea that the portraits could have appeared at any period different from the time when the pillars were erected.

passed away, and his nephew Bālarāmavarma had ascended the throne, the portrait of the latter also would have been set up.

While the conclusion stated above appears to be legitimate, a few apparent incongruities have to be explained. In the first place, Rāmavarma Kārtikai Tirunāl was very old about 1798 A.D.; but the portrait depicts him to be a man of about 50 years of age. Perhaps, the explanation is that the portrait was actually carved several years earlier; undoubtedly, it must have taken several years for the completion of the work. Secondly, the ear ornament and dress appear to have belonged to an earlier date. This, again, affords no definite clue, since many later portraits and figures in this temple and elsewhere are depicted with this old type of elongated ornament, earlier mode of dress, etc.[27]

The portraits are, no doubt, chiselled with supreme care and skill, and they rank among the remarkable works of art in the temple. Mr. T. G. Aravamudan seems to be rather severe when he writes[28] that "the two statues cannot be considered very fine pieces of work, if we may judge merely from the pose." It must be remembered that neither the king nor the crown prince is depicted there as a warrior ready for fighting a battle. The swords, the scabbard and the dagger are merely emblems of their royal position.

It is striking that at the top of the big statue is found the figure of Viṣṇu holding the conch and discus in his hands and seated on the coils of the five-headed Ādiśēṣa, whose hood forms the canopy of the image. Correspondingly at the top of the smaller portrait is Śiva and Pārvati. It has to be observed that in both the cases the feet of the gods are shown touching the crowns of the sculptured figures. The object of that feature is to emphasize the obeisance of rulers to the deities. The portraits in a temple, even if they be of royal personages, have to be depicted as devotees.

The various figures in each group, together with the pilasters and the imposing entablature at the top, are all chiselled out of a monolith. The dexterity of workmanship is admirable. Particularly the two pilasters, between which the portraits are found, are exquisitely carved with decorative floral devices, lotus buds and pendants of bead wreaths. The portraits themselves are chiselled elegantly, great care having been devoted to the proper execution of the minutest details. The crown on

27 See Supra section on Portraits in the Garuḍālvār shrine.

28. 'Portrait Sculpture in South India', p. 59.

the head of the senior ruler shows elaborate carving and its profuse ornamentation excites admiration. The ears present coils of ear rings passing into one another, thus forming a very long ear ornament touching the shoulders. The chest and the waist are decorated profusely with skilfully shaped ornaments. Over the shoulders hang garlands of beads, while the hands and fingers are adorned by wristlets and rings respectively. A thin piece of cloth is tied around the loin but the upper part of the body is uncovered. On the right leg of the bigger portrait a chain fastened around the ankle is shown; evidently, it is the Vīraśrṅkala or Vīrakalāla worn only by monarchs. The Vīrakalāla is conspicuous by its absence in the case of the smaller portrait.

It is noticeable that the sculptures of the attendants too, are not of poor quality There are two attendants, one on the northern and the other on the southern side of each of the portraits.[29] In the case of the bigger statue, the attendant on the northern side is standing in a slanting pose; the one on the southern side has a more elegantly carved head-dress than the former; perhaps, he is a junior member of the royal family. Both these figures are short, and come up only to the shoulders of the king; they assume the anjalihasta form and an obeisant attitude.

On the northern and southern side of the smaller portrait also, there are two attendants. The southern figure has his hands in a worshipping attitude, while the other holds a piece of cloth on the right hand and a '*Pidimonda*' or a vessel for carrying water, on the left.[30] The attendant on the southern side is shown in a slanting pose, perhaps to conform to the pose adopted by the corresponding attendant on the opposite side.

(d) *Portraits on the entrance to the Nāṭakaśāla:* The latest of the portrait sculptures in the Sucīndram pagoda are the two found just at the entrance to the Nāṭakaśāla. The two figures, one on the northern side and another on the southern, are not stationed as mere decorative elements. On the other hand, the purpose of the statues is to commemorate the services rendered by the two gentlemen to the temple. The figure on the southern side is that of Nīlakaṇṭhar Puruṣōttamar of

29 The portrait on the east could not be photographed, since it has been enclosed by railings.

30. These form part of the paraphernalia of the king when he visits a temple. Before approaching each shrine of the pagoda as also before receiving prasada, the king is to wash his hands. The cloth is for rubbing the hands after the wash.

Tekkuman Maṭha, as the inscription behind the statue states. The traditional view is that the statue represents the member of the Maṭha who had collected huge sums of money for the construction of the Śrībalipura.

The figure opposite is that of the contemporary Maṭādhipati of Tiruvāḍuturai who is said to have co-operated with Purusōttamar in the noble effort. The period to which these portraits belong can be fixed with a certain measure of accuracy. They must have been set up only after the construction of the Śrībalipura and of the Nāṭakaśāla. The former was completed about 1795 A.D., while the latter must have been erected between 1795 and 1800 A.D.

Both these life-size statues are carved out of well-polished gneiss and are fixed to stone pedestals, about 2½ feet high. With hands clasped in anjali, the figures are shown in an attitude of worship. The portrait of the Pōṟṟi presents the distinctive features of a Malayāḷi Brahmin. His tuft of hair is worked into a knot on the front part of his head after the orthodox Malayāḷi fashion. The portrait of the Matādhipati shows him wearing around his clean shaven head a chain of beads. On his forehead is clearly seen the mark of holy ashes. Indeed, the general demeanour, too, suggests that he is a Śaiva devotee. However, his protruding belly and beaming face are indicative of the prosperous and affluent position of the Matādhipati. In spite of the realistic touch noticeable in both the portraits, the sculptural workmanship is of a second-rate quality. They lack the suppleness and fineness in execution, prominent in several other portraits of the pagoda.

Conclusion: The portraits in Śucīndram show that this branch of art was not neglected. It had been held by some art critics that realistic portrait statues do not figure prominently in the development of fine art in India. Dr. V. A. Smith says: "Well-authenticated portrait statues are rare in India."[31] Again, Dr. Ph. Vogel holds that 'on the whole, portrait statues of kings are extremely rare in Indian art'.[32] And, the conclusion has been drawn that 'the Hindu had a disinclination to or aversion from realistic likenesses".[33]

The specimens of portrait sculpture found in South India run counter to such sweeping generalizations. Some of the early works of Tamil literature contain indications of the popularity of portrait sculptures.

31. V A. Smith: "History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon," (1911), p. 238.
32. Ph. Vogel: "Influence of Indian Art", (1925), p. 81.
33. V. A. Smith: "History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon," (1911), p. 496.

The most outstanding instance is that of consecrating images of the hero and the heroine of "Cilappadikāram". The portraits in Śucīndram show that this was not a neglected field. But it must be admitted that while the sculptors paid great attention to the proper embellishment of the portraits, they do not appear to have devoted the same care for achieving exact likeness to the original.[34]

SECTION 6. SCULPTURES OF GODS AND GODDESSES

A. *Sculptures in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa*: The pavilion which arose later in the same century is the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. On the 32 pillars of this structure are found numerous sculptures in low relief. There are three rectangular panels on each face of the pillar, and most of them are adorned by sculptures. However, some of them are repetitions of deities and scenes noticed in other parts of the pagoda. The peculiar sculptures alone are described below.

Gaṇēśāni: (Plate No. 19). A unique piece of sculpture found on the westernmost pillar of the northern row of the Maṇḍapa is that of a feminine figure equipped with the face and trunk of an elephant. She is seated in the Sukhāsana pose with the right leg kept folded across her seat and the other hanging down and resting on a pedestal. Her drapery, stretching down to her feet, her jewels around the neck, and above all, her prominent feminine bust doubtless prove that the figure represents a goddess and not Gaṇēśa. It is significant that no tusk is shown.

Her front right and left hands present the abhaya and varada mudras respectively; her back right hand holds a hatchet, while the corresponding left one keeps the pāśam. It is remarkable that the trunk, though turned to the left as in the case of the ordinary 'Iḍampuri Vināyakar' does not rest on the body of the figure, but is stretched further left, almost touching the pāśam held in her back left hand. On the head she wears an ornamental kirīṭa. The sculptor has carved also an excellent floral design just above her head. On the whole, it is one of the most skilfully and artistically executed pieces of sculpture.

However, the identification of the figure is not easy. Obviously it is not a representation of 'Ganapati'. Very probably it is a goddess with the head and trunk of an elephant symbolic of Gaṇapati. Legendary lore has it that this is the feminine form of Gaṇapati (Ganēśa), called Gaṇēśāni. Doubtless, this is a rare piece of sculpture. So far, only

34. Notice the deviations observed in the portraits of Tirumala Nāyak and of the later Travancore kings

one other sculpture of Gaṇēśāni is known; this is found in a village near Jubbalpore in Central India. The description of that figure tallies word for word with the Śucīndram sculpture under consideration. The only additional element in the Central Indian sculpture is that, beneath the seat of Gaṇēśāni there appears a masculine figure with the face of an elephant.

B. *Ūñcal Maṇḍapa:* This pavilion arose about 1584 A.D. A few outstanding pieces of sculpture adorn the pillars of the raised platform in the middle of the Maṇḍapa.

(1) *Manmatha:* (Plate No. 7). The pillar at the south-eastern corner presents an elaborately carved life-size sculpture of Manmatha. The eldest son of Kṛṣṇa, and the personification of manly beauty, Manmatha is the Hindu God of Love. Manmatha or Kāma is believed to enjoy everlasting youth and is the most handsome of all the gods. This sculpture at Sucīndram, like several others of Manmatha in South Indian temples, tries to depict him as a graceful youth of radiant elegance. He is shown standing in the tribhaṅga (thrice bent) pose. The long conical crown or kirīṭamakuṭa is most elaborately carved; the decoration extends to both the sides of the crown. Each of his ear-lobes presents a long bunch of rings. Around his neck and waist, as also on his chest, are found several well-carved jewels. Ornaments adorn his arms and ankles; even the legs are not free. The 'Śilparatna' prescribes that the figure should have appropriate ornaments on the body and a closely knit garland of flowers around his neck. The Śucīndram sculpture fulfils all these requirements eminently well.

Though the 'Viṣṇudharmōttara' describes Manmatha as possessing eight hands, in Śucīndram as in several other South Indian temples, he is represented with two hands only.[35] His left hand holds a long stalk of sugar cane, believed to serve as his bow. Even the leaves on the top of it are vividly shown. A part of the stalk of sugarcane has become damaged, and now that part is plastered with cement. The right hand holds a single lotus flower; evidently, it is designed to represent the five flowery arrows.[36] A parrot is shown perching on the fingers of his right hand.

35. The 'Śilparatna' describes him as having two hands only, the left hand carrying a bow of sugar-cane and the right holding five flowery arrows

36. His five arrows are the flowers of lotus, asoka, mango, jasmine and blue lily.

His arms and his chest are brawny and well developed. But it is doubtful whether the legs, the face and the moustache of Manmatha have been properly sculptured. Obviously they do not tend to make Manmatha look young. In fact, Manmatha here appears past middle age. This is a defect, though very elaborate ornamentation has been employed in the sculpturing of the figure.

Manmatha is shown standing over a chariot. On each of the two front wheels of the chariot, a parrot is sculptured. Evidently it represents the parrot as the real vehicle of Manmatha. On each of the northern, southern and western faces of the same pillar, a woman is depicted, rising up to the height of Manmatha's waist. The woman on the west i.e., just to the back of Manmatha is perhaps an attendant, since she is shown holding an umbrella.[37] The other two figures, on the right and left of Manmatha are very probably the two goddesses, Priti and Rati.[38] It is remarkable that the figures appearing on all the faces of the pillar have been carved out of a monolith. There is no doubt that the entire piece of sculpture is the product of great skill.

The striking feature about the Sucīndram sculpture of Manmatha is that it appears to bear a close resemblance to the image found in the Viśvanāthasvāmy temple at Tenkāśi. The only difference is that the image at Tenkāśi bears four hands. Otherwise, the similarity is marked.[39] The exact identity in the style of ornamentation and in the pose of the figures indicates that this was a copy of the sculpture of Manmatha at Tenkāśi which is known to have appeared in the 15th century A.D.

(2) *Rati* :—Attached to the pillar on the northern side, corresponding to the one presenting Manmatha, is the sculpture of Rati, the consort of Manmatha. She is represented as riding majestically on the swan (hamsa), her vehicle, exquisitely carved. Well-proportioned and well-poised, the swan is beeming with life and vigour. The charming decoration of its wings, spread fanwise, adds grandeur to its sprightly appearance. Just to the back of the outstretched wing of the hamsa is shown a tree, which affords the background for the swan and her elegant rider.

37. She does not seem to be the standard-bearer who, according to Śilparatna, must be having the face of a horse and must be carrying the makra banner

38. 'Śilparatna' demands that Vasanta, the personification of the Spring Season also should be standing on one side of Manmatha; it is missing here.

39. See T. A. G. Rao 'Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, Part I, p 277.

Rati, as the embodiment of feminine beauty, is portrayed with a handsome face, an attenuated waist, fully developed breasts and a sprightly pose.[40] It is but natural that she wears numerous jewels. Around her neck, waist, hands and legs are found appropriate ornaments. Her ear ornament is a long descending chain of coils. The abundant hair on her head is elegantly done into a knot at the top There is no doubt that the sculpture of Rati is splendidly executed. The lively expression on her face and the charming majesty of her pose suggest that she is full of glee and is dancing with joy. A tiny parrot is shown perched on her left shoulder. On each of the sides of the pillar, the northern and southern, is found a woman; evidently, both are attendants of Rati.

(3) *Karṇa* :—(Plate No. 9): A western pillar of the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa presents the sculpture of Karṇa. The general artistic make-up of the figure resembles that of Manmatha. The standing pose is just the same, with bent legs. Almost the same type of ornamentation adorns this figure, too. An exquisitely carved karaṇḍa mākuḍa decks his head. The face, with its clear-cut features and a virile moustache, marks him out as a man of action. The ear-lobes have the same coils of ear-rings as in the case of the other figures in the Maṇḍapa. The drapery of the upavīta is nicely depicted. A long garland, around his neck, reaches below the waist.

Like the other figures in the pavilion, that of Karṇa is shown with two hands. His left hand holds a bow, while his right has in its grips a serpent, which, with its uplifted hood, is clearly noticeable. The identification of the figure depends entirely upon this feature, for the one epic hero reputed to have had the serpent as the bāṇa (arrow) is Karṇa.

On the southern face of the pillar is sculptured the figure of a woman depicted as handing over a small roll to Karṇa. Her height is only about half that of Karṇa. Probably she is a female attendant passing on a roll of betel leaves to her master. On the eastern face of the same pillar is delineated the scene of a man carrying a woman on his shoulders. It appears to be the portrayal of the legend of Manmatha

40. Unfortunately the face of the figure has been mutilated; and its beauty has been seriously affected.

carrying Rati. The fact that he holds a lotus flower in his right hand affords confirmation of the identification. He holds the left foot of Rati in his left hand. The northern face of the pillar presents the figure of a handsome woman holding a long garland between her two outstretched hands. The popular belief is that it represents Rati's preparation for the svayamvara of Manmatha.[41]

(4) *Arjuna* :—(Plate No. 10): Corresponding to the above is the pillar on the north-west corner which presents a figure standing on a chariot drawn by horses. Of the same height, and carved almost on the same pattern as Karṇa, this figure seems to be a complement to the former. The same kind of karaṇḍa mukuḍa and elaborate jewellery adorn this figure, too. However, the distinctive feature is that, in addition to the moustache, a beard is also shown, which, on account of its excessive length has been tied into a knot at the level of his chest. His left hand holds a long bow and his right an arrow. The bow and arrow are found damaged and a patch work with cement has been undertaken recently. This sculpture seems to represent Arjuna with whom Karṇa is often associated. The circumstance that this figure appears on a pillar corresponding to that presenting Karṇa, suggests it. The bow and arrow usually appearing in the representations of Arjuna are found here; and they lend support to this identification. The existence of the beard is explained by the circumstance that Arjuna had allowed his beard to grow during the exile of 12 years. Apparently, this sculpture represents Arjuna about the time of the Mahābhārata battle.

On the northern face of the pillar is found the figure of a sanyāsin or saint bearing on his left hand a kamaṇḍalam. His right hand is seen mutilated. On the southern and eastern faces, representations of Vēṇu Gōpāla are shown; both of them however, are clumsily carved. Most probably, these figures are incorporated merely for filling up space on the face of the pillar.

C. *Sculptures on the panels of the Gōpura Base:*

The plinth surface of the Gōpura base contains numerous panels, each of which presents the sculpture of gods, goddesses or a Purāṇic theme. As observed already, this part of the Gōpura was constructed

41. 'Svayamvara' is the ancient Hindu practice of a girl choosing her own life's partner. She garlands the person of her choice and then the marriage takes place

about 1545 A.D. The prominent among these sculptural illustrations of the 16th century are described below.

(1) *Liṅgōdbhavamūrti* :—(Plate No. 20): This form of Śiva, represented on the 6th panel to the south of the Gōpuravāśal, is an interesting manifestation emphasizing Śiva's omnipotence. The Purāṇic story concerning the rise of this mūrti runs as follows[42]:—

A dispute occurred between Brahmā and Viṣṇu as to who was the creator of the Universe and thus the greater of the two. At this juncture, Śiva emerged in the form of a liṅga resembling the great cosmic fire and told the disputants that whoever first saw the top of his own fiery liṅga form would be adjudged the greater of the two. Accordingly, Brahmā assuming the role of a hamsa (swan) flew up in the air, while Viṣṇu taking the shape of a boar burrowed down into the earth. Ages passed and neither reached his goal. Brahmā, however, eventually uttered a lie that he saw the top of the Śiva liṅga and cited a Kētaki flower as his witness; but it was discredited. As a penalty for this false utterance, Brahmā was denied worship on earth. The superiority of Śiva was acknowledged, though Śiva, in his turn, emphasized the unity of the three gods.

In the liṅgōdbhava or manifestation of the liṅga form of Śiva, according to the Āgamās, the figure of Śiva is to be carved in the aspect of Candraśēkharamūrti, on the front part of a liṅga. Further, it is prescribed that the liṅga at the very top and at the base is to be left unsculptured, while Śiva's figure is to appear in the middle. Also, it is required that Brahmā is to be represented as a hamsa at the top of the right side of the liṅga and Viṣṇu as a boar to the left of the base.

The Śucīndram sculpture of Liṅgōdbhava conforms to these prescriptions in the main, and has been carved with care and skill. Śiva's figure is portrayed splendidly. A majestic grace beams on his face. The figure is bounded all over by a rising tier of stone, indicating the emergence of the Mūrti. But, as against the Āgamic injunction, the legs of Śiva below the knees down to the ankles, are shown. His back

42. The Liṅga Purāna, the Kūrma Purāṇa, the Vāyu Purāna and the Śiva Purāna all expound the story.

right hand holds the axe and the back left has the antelope, while the front right and left hands show the abhaya and varada.[43]

At the top of the right side of Śiva is depicted the flying swan, but at the bottom of the left, Brahmā himself is shown in a miniature scale, his height coming up only to the level of the chest of Śiva. Brahmā is sculptured elegantly with four faces and four arms. His two front hands assume the anjali pose; the right upper hand seems to hold a discus, while the left upper one bears a kamaṇḍalu. It is obvious that the sculpture of the swan is of a poor quality. Its body is too big in relation to its head and legs, and the effect is far from pleasing. The 'Kāmikāgama' states that the size of the swan must be the same as that of the face of Śiva; but, here it is twice as big as Śiva's face.

To the right of Śiva stands Viṣṇu. His height also is just the same as that of Brahmā in the sculpture. Viṣṇu's upper hands present the discus and the conch, while the right lower hand shows the varada and the left lower one hangs down in the Kātyāvalambita pose touching his hip. The jewels on the person of Viṣṇu are beautifully represented as in the case of Brahmā and Śiva. Nevertheless, the figure of Viṣṇu has not been sculptured very satisfactorily. The stomach shows an inclination to protrude, which does not fit in with the description of Viṣṇu. Moreover, his face in the sculpture is rather wooden, though the Āgamic prescription is that it must indicate submission.

Immediately to the back of Viṣṇu is seen a boar sculptured rather indistinctly; the form of the boar cannot be easily made out. The 'Kāmikāgama' states that the size of the boar should be twice that of the face of Śiva. Apparently, that prescription has not been adhered to, for it seems to be only of the same size as Śiva's face. Nor is the boar depicted as digging into the earth as is required by the 'Kāmikāgama'.

(2) *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* :—(Plate No. 21): Proceeding further, we find that the very last panel on the base of the Gōpura to the south of the Gōpuravāśal presents the sculpture of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Here, it is in the Vyākhyānamūrti form i.e., as the expounder of śāstrās to disciples that he is depicted. His seat is represented as being covered with a tiger's skin. The sitting posture adopted here is known as the Vīrāsana. His

43 The 'Śilparatna' requires that Śiva in this form must bear the trident in one of his hands, a feature not adopted here. Further the Āgamās prescribe that the digit of the moon should adorn the crown of Śiva emphasizing the aspect of Candraśēkharamūrti; it is not distinctly shown, if at all, in the Sucīndram sculpture.

right leg is hanging below the seat, while the left one, bent vertically at the knee, rests across on the right thigh. The right leg which hangs down, rests on the back of the dark demon Apasmāra, who, represented as lying under the right foot of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, holds in his left hand a serpent, the hood of which, is shown clearly. The right hand of the demon is depicted in the sarpamudra pose ; i.e , the palm of his hand is held in the form of a cobra's hood. This accords with the prescription of 'Śilpasaṅgraha'.

'Śilparatna' specifies that Dakṣiṇāmūrti must have three eyes and four arms In the Śucīndram sculpture, the third eye is not distinctly seen, though a small projection found at the centre of the forehead is perhaps intended to signify it. Of the four hands, the front right one points the jñānamudra, (which conveys philosophical knowledge) presenting the rudrākṣamāla in between the thumb and the forefinger, while the front left hand is stretched straight in the danda pose, the wrist resting upon his left knee. The fingers of his front left hand are poised rather too stiffly, indicative of firmness and determination. The back right hand holds the hatchet and the back left hand the antelope. In this respect, there is a variation from what is found in other temples and in the recommendations of the texts, according to which the back hands hold aksamāla, agni, sarpa or a book. In no other representation of Dakṣiṇāmūrti are found the antelope and the hatchet being held.

The body is shown assuming an unbending rigidity, evidently expressive of his resolute will and calm serenity, which the teacher of Śāstrās is expected to possess. His head bears a jaṭā-bandha, which in its turn, is embellished with the flowers of the dhurdhura arranged in a fanwise manner. His left ear has a patra kuṇḍala and the right a makrakuṇḍala. Around his neck are found several necklaces.

However, the facial expression of the image has nót been successfully depicted, for, not only does it lack grace, but that sublime peace and calmness, which it is expected to radiate, are missing. According to the 'Kāraṇāgama' in the Vyākyānamūrti form, Dakṣiṇāmūrti's sight is to be fixed on the tip of his toe ; perhaps this ideal is aimed at here, though the desired object cannot be said to have been achieved.

At his feet are seated two ṛiṣis, evidently eager to learn the Śāstrās. The ṛiṣis are depicted as short, their sitting posture not rising above the seat of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. In the sculptures found in many other temples,

as also in the texts, several ṛiṣis are shown learning the Śāstras. The Purāṇic story concerning the rise of Vyākharaṇamūrti runs as follows :—

Once Dakṣa, the father-in-law of Śiva insulted Śiva and Pārvati by not inviting them to a sacrifice. When Umā went unsolicited, she was neglected, and out of shame and anger, she destroyed herself. Śiva avenged her death by killing Daksa with the help of Vīrabhadra, whom he created for the purpose. Śiva, then resolving not to marry again, retired to the forest and engaged himself in meditation. In this form Śiva is conceived as a youthful guru, teaching aged pupils and infusing knowledge into them by his very silence. Later, he was disturbed by Kāma, after which he married Umā, who had become reincarnated as Pārvati.

An interesting aspect of the sculpture of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is, as pointed out by Dubreuil, its possible association with the Buddha's first sermon to his early five pupils. Dubreuil suggests the connection because in the early sculptures of Daksiṇāmūrti, hinds are seen at the feet of the god and the first sermon of the Buddha took place in the 'deer park'. But it is remarkable that, besides the deer, a snake and birds also are shown; obviously, these appear in order to indicate that the venue of instruction was a forest. It is doubtful, whether much could be built upon the slender piece of coincidence concerning the deer.

(3) *Jvaradēvamūrti*:—(Plate No. 22). The third panel to the north of the Gōpuravāśal presents a rather rare form of Saṁhāramūrti, known as Jvaradēva or Jvarabhagnamūrti. Very few temples contain the sculpture of this deity, the only other place prominently featuring it being Bhavāni. The circumstances leading to the adoption of this form by Lord Paramēśvara are mentioned in Śaiva mythology as follows :—

Once Śiva and Viṣṇu were engaged in a mock-fight. On the eve of the game, Viṣṇu, in the role of Kṛṣna, encouraged and blessed by Śiva, entered upon his final conflict with Vāṇan, the son of Mahābali. During the course of this mock-fight Kṛṣṇa aimed at Śiva an arrow causing severe fever. It was then that Śiva, in order to overpower the fever, assumed this strange form with three heads, nine eyes, four arms and three legs.

In the sculpture at Śucīndram, as also at Bhavāni, only 4 eyes are clearly seen; it is obvious that the two faces on either side are presumed to have two other eyes, while the eyes on the foreheads would bring

the total to nine. But, whereas in the image at Bhavāni the eye on the forehead appears clearly, at least on the central face, in the case of the image at Śucīndram, it is not all all distinct.

Only three arms are definitely seen in both the images; presumably another arm is taken to be hidden from view. Two arms are shown on the proper right and one on the left. The outer hand on the right holds a trident or triśūla, and the inner right has a small bell. The left hand appears to hold a collection of palm leaves. In the sculpture at Bhavāni, the disposition of the hands is different; two hands are shown on the proper left and one on the right. While two hands assume the abhaya varada mudras, the outer left shows fire burning from the outstretched palm.

The Āgamas and Īśānagurudēvapaddhati describe the deity as having three legs, two on the right side and one on the left. In the Śucīndram and Bhavāni sculptures, this prescription is adhered to. But, as contrasted with the figure in Bhavāni, the one at Śucīndram has all the three legs resting on the pedestal; in Bhavāni the leg on the left side is raised as if to suggest a moving pose. It may further be mentioned that unlike in Bhavāni, no prabha or halo around the head is found in the Śucīndram sculpture. The popular idea is that Jvaradēvamūrti has the power of curing fever. Often devotees visiting the Śucīndram pagoda smear pepper paste on the image believing that they would obtain relief from their malady by doing so. According to the Āgamas, Jvaradēvamūrti is to be depicted as being dejected and downcast in appearance. This feature is demonstrated well in the sculpture at Śucīndram; the facial expression almost suggests a weeping countenance.

(4) *Gajaharamūrti* :—(Plate No. 23): It is interesting to find that the easternmost panel on the northern outer base of the Gōpura contains a nicely executed representation of Gajaharamūrti, though it is now in a mutilated state. Gajaharamūrti, also known as Gajāsurasamhāramūrti, is a form of Śiva, depicted as the slayer of the elephant demon Gajamukha.[44] Śiva is seen assuming a militant attitude. His round terrific eyes and the pair of virile side tusks present the ferocious aspect of the deity. Over his head is carved the Jaṭāmaṇḍala; a part

44. The 'Kūrma Purāna' describes how Śiva emerged out of the Śiva Linga when some Brahmins who were worshipping it were disturbed by an asura in the shape of an elephant and so killing it made its skin his upper garment.

of it, however, is damaged. Encircling the standing figure of Siva is shown the hide of the elephant formed in the shape of an aureola; the idea is that, piercing through the body of the elephant, its skin is employed as his outer garment. In fact, the skin is so sculptured as to look like a prabhāmaṇḍala for the image of Śiva. His left foot presses down the skin vigorously, and just beneath that foot is shown the head of the vanquished elephant. His right leg is bent and lifted up above the knee of the other leg in the utkiṭikāsana posture. The tail of the elephant is visible over the makuḍa of Śiva, and on either side of it can be seen a leg of the elephant, while still lower down, the other pair of legs is correspondingly shown.

The image of Śiva has eight arms; the two outermost ones are seen stretched out holding fast the hide of the elephant. In the three right hands are held the trident (badly broken here) the sword and perhaps a pāśa; two left hands bear the shield and a bell respectively, while the third, holding some unidentifiable object, shows the vismaya pose, indicative of astonishment.

The prescription in the 'Śilparatna' that, on the left side of the Gajasaṁhāramūrti should stand the Dēvī with Skanda to her left, is not adopted here. However, on the whole, the Śucīndram sculpture is nicely executed, and forms an admirable piece of art. Yet, in total effect, it ranks inferior to similar representations at Dārāsuram and Tiruccengāṭṭuṅguḍi. Undoubtedly, the best representation of Gajāsuramūṛti is the superb bronze image at Valuvūr, the reputed place of Gajāsura's destruction.

(5) *Trivikṛama*:—(Plate No. 24): Far more excellent is the second panel to the north of the Gōpuravāśal which depicts the Purāṇic theme illustrating the Vāmanāvatār of Viṣnu. Called in Samskṛit as Trivikṛama, that is, the god who took three strides, and in Tamil̲ as Ulagaḷandaperumāḷ, namely, the god who measured the universe, the figure represents Viṣnu in the act of measuring the Universe with his outstretched left foot.

The story runs thus: Once, a powerful demon, Bāli, conquered the three worlds and ruled them in a righteous manner. This led to the suppression of Indra. Viṣṇu, as the preserver of divine dispensations and as the destroyer of demons, restored Indra to his legitimate position. As Bāli was ruling virtuously, Visnu, in fairness, could not wage war

with him. Hence, assuming the guise of a brahmin dwarf, he approached Bāli and begged of him for three feet of land. When the request was granted, the Vāmana suddenly grew to a height transcending the world, covered the whole earth with one step, the sky with the next one and demanded of Bāli to furnish him space for the third step. Obliged to fulfil his pledged word, Bāli offered his own head, on which the god placed his foot and pushed him down to the lower regions.

The panel in the Gōpura presents an excellent sculpture vividly portraying the scene of Viṣṇu in the form of Trivikrama stretching out his left foot and measuring one huge stride. Trivikrama is shown with eight arms, four on each side. On the left, the topmost arm is lifted up, the forefinger pointing in the sūci pose, obviously drawing attention to the pouring of holy water by the gods above. The second hand holds a dhanus or bow, while the third bears a conch and the last presents a shield. On the right, the topmost hand bears a gata, the second an arrow, the third a discus, and the fourth a sword. In passing, it may be observed that the grip of the hand which holds the discus is artificial and conventional.

Beneath the uplifted left foot of Trivikrama, Bāli is seen offering to him the three worlds; the process of bestowing the gift is indicated by the pouring of water from a kiṇḍi (cruse) on the right hand of the dwarfish Vāmana who stands with an umbrella protecting his head. Garuda is behind him. At the northernmost corner of the panel is found a representation of Śukrācārya, the guru of Bāli. It is believed that Śukra, apprehending serious consequences, had dissuaded Bāli from granting the gift. Finding his plea unavailing, he assumed the form of a bee, got into the hole of the cruse and obstructed the passage of the water. Resenting this, Garuḍa thrusted a dharbha blade of grass through the hole, and it resulted in the blinding of the right eye of Śukrācārya. The figure of Śukra, sitting dejected in a corner with his right hand covering the affected eye, is very suggestive.

Right at the top of the panel, Brahmā is seen pouring water from a kamaṇḍalu on the unlifted foot of Trivikrama; it is believed to depict the solemnization of the gift deed. Along with Brahmā, three figures, presumably those of Dēvās, are shown. The one at the northern extremity is apparently Śiva with the forearms clasped as anjali hasta and the two outer hands holding the hatchet and the antelope, in the right and left respectively. The two other figures, in between Brahmā and

Śiva, may be Sūrya and Candra. They are shown with their hands stretched out apparently in the act of praising Trivikrama. But it is difficult to be too definite about the identification of these two figures, for the distinctive features of these gods in the Mahābalipuram representation of Trivikrama are missing here. Further, Sūrya and Candra are depicted in the Mahābalipuram sculpture below Śiva and not in between Śiva and Brahmā. Hence nothing more can be asserted than that the two figures represented are gods of the Svarga lōka. Just above and below these celestial figures, the sky and clouds are shown effectively by a number of wavy undulations.

This sculptured panel at Śucīndram, though excellently executed, is not as perfect in details as in similar sculptures in other temples, because several other figures are also represented in temples like those at Bādāmi and Mahābalipuram. Besides, the 'Vaikhānasāgama' and 'Śilparatna' mention that Varuṇa, Vāyu, Jāmbavān, Garuḍa, Sanyāsa, Sanaka and the rākṣasa called Nāmucci also are to be assigned places in the sculpture of Trivikrama Avatār. Evidently, the limited space within which the theme had to be sculptured is responsible for the omission of the other figures.

Moreover, certain deviations from the texts in the disposition of the sculptured figures deserve to be noticed. Here, it is the left foot of Trivikrama that is lifted up; in most of the other places except at Nuggehalli it is so; but the Śilparatna requires that the images of Trivikrama should be sculptured as standing on the left leg, the right being stretched out. As for the position of the raised leg, it may be in three different ways — lifted up to the level of the right knee or up to the navel or right up to the forehead. In the sculpture at Śucīndram the last mentioned position is adopted. The angle at which the leg is raised and the corresponding angles at which the head and arms are poised, have been achieved splendidly well, producing an excellent effect. The left foot has been slightly mutilated at present. Though there are four more representations of Trivikrama in the temple, in the panels of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa and the Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa, none equals this one in the artistic merit of its execution.

(6) *Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa :* (Plate No. 25): The 6th panel to the south of the Gōpuravāśal bears the sculpture of Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa, that is Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu riding on Garuḍa. Here, Viṣṇu is shown only with two hands, the right holding up an unsheathed sword and the left a shield

of rectangular shape. But the left hand is not clearly seen; the arm and the shield alone are depicted, while the hand and the fingers are not seen at all; apparently the negligence of the sculptor is responsible for the omission.

Describing Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa, the 'Śilpasāra' states that Viṣṇu is equipped as usual with four hands, the front two holding a bow and arrow and the back two bearing a conch and discus. A sculpture of Garuḍa Nārāyana found at Cidambaram also shows Viṣṇu with four hands; the two front arms are, however, found mutilated. The graceful poise of Viṣṇu on the bending Garuḍa is elegantly depicted. Garuḍa is shown kneeling on his right knee with his outstretched hands supporting Nārāyana's feet. A similar piece of sculpture is found at Kanchipuram under the name of Varadarājasvāmi. There is no doubt that the Kanchipuram sculpture is of a decidedly higher order than the one at Śucīndram. Garuḍa, with his beak-like nose and well-developed muscles, and Varadarāja (Viṣṇu) with his exuberant jewels, produce a more impressive effect than at Śucīndram.

(7) *Pārtasārathi in the 'Viśvarūpa' form*: (Plate No. 26): An interesting and a rather uncommon piece of sculpture is found in the northernmost panel of the outer base of the Gōpura. This is a representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the role of Pārtasārathi or the charioteer of Arjuna,[45] delivering the message of the Gīta. It is well-known that Kṛṣṇa took an active part in the Mahābhārata war on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas and served as Arjunā's charioteer. It was on the eve of the battle that Kṛṣṇa assuming the Viśvarūpa form, delivered the celebrated Bhagavad Gīta to Arjuna and to the world. This piece of sculpture represents the 'Viśvarūpadarśana Yōga' of the Gīta.

Now, we shall turn our attention to the details of the sculpture. At the base is the chariot drawn by horses; two are seen facing south. We have the view of only four wheels of the chariot, two on the southern and two others on the northern end. Presumably the chariot is drawn on eight wheels. In the front part of the chariot, almost to the back of the horses, where normally the charioteer would be found, stands Kṛṣṇa in the form of Tṛimūrti. In relation to all other elements in the sculpture like the chariot and the horses, the figure of Kṛṣṇa appears in a huge proportion. The idea underlying this feature is that Kṛṣṇa is revealing his Viśvarūpam (the real form) to Arjuna.

45. 'Pārta' is a name of Arjuna and Sārathi means charioteer.

The figure bears three faces and eight arms; Kṛṣṇa shows himself as the embodiment of the Trimūrtis. The central face represents Viṣṇu, the right one Śiva and the left Brahmā. His outermost right hand holds the discus and the corresponding left the conch. The lower right hands hold a banner with the figure of Hanumān depicted on the top of it, an akṣamāla and varadamudra respectively, while the corresponding lower left hands show an antelope, a kamaṇḍala and the varadamudra. The crowns on the heads are elegantly carved, while around the neck are shown numerous chains and jewels. Even the drapery below the waist is skilfully carved. Above all, the charming grace of the central face is splendidly portrayed.

To the left of Kṛṣṇa, that is, near the back part of the chariot is the figure of Arjuna leaning forward on his knees and touching the left foot of Kṛṣṇa in obeisant reverence. Tucked up prominently in his left armpit is found the bow, while on his back are seen the quiver of arrows tied up. Apparently Arjuna is devoutly invoking the blessings of Kṛṣṇa and listening to his words with wrapt attention.

Dr. Cousins has ventured on a different identification of this sculptural representation.[46] First he suggested that the sculpture portrays Sthāṇumālaya or Trimūrti, the principal deity of the temple. Encountering difficulties in fitting certain features of the sculpture into his scheme of identification, he was constrained to adopt another scheme. He held that the sculpture presents Sūrya in the higher concept of his association with the Hindu Trinity. The figure on bended knees, he said, is Aruṇa, the charioteer of Sūrya.

It is not possible to agree with Dr. Cousins in his identification of the figures in the sculpture. If it is a presentation of Sūrya in his association with the Trinity, the image of Sūrya should not be borne on an eight-wheeled chariot but on a single-wheeled one, drawn by seven horses, as is required by the texts. Here, only a pair of horses is seen. No stretch of the imagination can picture five horses on the hidden side! Moreover, if it were not Kṛṣṇa appearing in his Viśvarūpa form and expounding the Gīta, what is the explanation for the master of the chariot appearing between the horses and the charioteer? Should the charioteer be assumed as Aruṇa, Sūrya is expected to be represented behind the charioteer. Finally, how is the banner depicting Hanumān accounted for in a

46. "The Hindu" of 12th April 1942.

representation of Sūrya ?[47] Dr. Cousins is aware of these anomalies, but he explains them away 'as arising out of local and individual circumstances'. In fact, no such explanation is possible or necessary. The details represented in the sculpture fit in eminently with the description of the Viśvarūpa Darśana Yōga.

The controversy over the identification should not hide the artistic merit of the sculpture. It is carved splendidly, suited to the magnificent theme represented. The charming grace of 'Trimūrti' and the appropriate pose of Arjuna are excellently depicted. On a panel in the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa also, the same theme is sculptured; but it is not half as graceful as this one.

(8) *Sūrya* (Plate No. 27): The panel just to the south of the Gōpuravāśal presents the sculpture of Sūrya, the Sun god, one of the navagrahas. He is shown standing in the samapādastānaka pose, generally adopted while conferring a bliss. His two upper hands, raised on the sides to the height of his shoulders, hold half-blossomed lotus flowers, the tips of which are on a level with his forehead.[48] The two lower right and left hands present the abhaya and varada mudras respectively. A cannavīra decorates his chest. The image has a thin udarabhandha reaching down to his knee; the legs and feet are left bare.[49] The head bears a kirīṭa, surrounded by a circular halo or prabhāmaṇḍala. The sculpture is carved well, and the figure has a graceful appearance.

(9) *Candra:* (Plate No. 28) : The panel immediately to the north of the Gōpuravāśal bears the sculpture of Candra, the god of Moon. This figure, too, stands in samapādastānaka pose. Both the back-hands hold a lily each, the tip of which reaches up to the level of the ear; thus this feature corresponds to that in the Sūrya sculpture. The right and left fore-hands present the abhaya and varada mudras. A concentric scheme of necklaces is sculptured around his neck, while bangles decorate his

47. The flag of Sūrya has a lion depicted on it Hanumān, on the other hand, is included among the emblems of Visnu.

48. The North Indian images of Sūrya generally have their hands raised only up to the level of the hips or elbows. Moreover, they carry full-blown lotuses.

49. In North India, the image of Sūrya has a cloth on the body as well as coverings for the fore-legs, while the feet are protected by foot-wear, which curiously resemble boots. See T A. Gopinatha Rao; 'Hindu Iconography', Vol. I, Part II, p. 311. In some places both in North and South India, Sūrya is depicted with the driver Aruna on a chariot drawn by 7 horses; in some cases attendant deities like Daṇḍa, Pingaḷa and the goddesses also are shown. Here, as in several other temples of Tamiḻ Nād, these do not appear.

wrists. A cannavīra is shown across the chests. An ornamented head-dress and a halo or prabhāmaṇḍala constitute the finishing touches.[50]

D. *Sculptures in the Citṛa Sabha :* Some of the outstanding sculptures of the temple are found in the Citṛa Sabha. Since the pavilion was constructed about 1629 A.D., the sculptures belong to the early 17th century.

(1) *Kaṅkāḷanāthar :* (Plate No. 11) : The eastern pillar at the entrance of the raised terrace of the Maṇḍapa presents an exquisitely carved figure of Kaṅkāḷanāthar.[51] The Purāṇic story regarding the rise of this form of Śiva, as expounded in the Kūrma Purāṇa, is as follows :

In a quarrel between Brahmā and Śiva as to who the real creator of the Universe was, Śiva lost his patience, and in a fit of anger, cut off one of the heads of Brahmā. To expiate the sin, Śiva was advised to beg for food in the skull of the head cut off by him till he achieved his redemption at the hands of Viṣṇu. Proceeding from place to place, he eventually reached the abode of Viṣṇu. But Viśvaksēna, the gate-keeper obstructed his entrance. A tussle ensued in which Visvaksēna was killed and thus, Śiva was guilty of another brahmahatya (sin of killing a brahmin). Fixing the body of Viśvaksēna on his trident, Śiva went inside and sought Viṣṇu's help for his redemption. Śiva was advised to proceed to Kāśi and there, he was freed from the sin, and then only the skull of Brahmā as well as the dead body of Viśvaksēna left him. Kaṅkāḷanāthar is the form of Śiva as a beggar bearing the skull of Brahmā and the dry bones (Kaṅkāḷa) of Viśvaksēna.[52]

Now to the details of the sculpture at the Citṛa Sabha. Undoubtedly, this forms the most impressive representation of Kaṅkāḷanāthar in the temple. It rises to a height of 5' 3". An elaborately carved Karaṇḍa-

50. The 'Śilparatna' requires that Candra should be depicted as seated in a chariot drawn by ten horses and that his right hand should hold a gada. The 'Matsya Purāna' prescribes that Candra should be depicted in the company of the goddesses Kānti and Śōbha. These features have not been adopted in the Sucīndram sculpture.

51. In the temple as a whole, there appear five sculptures of Kaṅkālanāthar, two on the panels on the Gōpura base and three on the faces of pillars of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa.

52. Bhikṣāḍanamūrti' is not very different from 'Kaṅkāḷanātha'. In the latter, greater prominence is given to 'Kaṅkāla' which is placed across his shoulder ; in the former the bones are used merely as staves. Bhiksādanamūrti is depicted as nude while Kaṅkāḷanātha is shown with an underwear of tiger's skin and an upper garment.

makuṭa adorns his head. The standing pose indicates that the figure is in the act of moving; the left leg is planted firmly on the ground, and the right one bent and kept a little forward. His feet are protected by wooden sandals, which are fastened to the feet by a peg (kamiḻ) which passes between the toes.

He wears apparently a silk cloth around his waist and an underwear stretching down. The figure is adorned with jewels on neck, chest, arms and the leg. His left back-hand holds horizontally across his shoulders a trident at the upper extremity of which is found pierced the Kankāḷa or the skeleton human figure. His back right hand hanging in the kaṭaka pose, almost touches a frolicking deer. He holds a kettledrum in his left forehand and the bāṇa or a stick to beat it with, in the corresponding right. A dagger is found tucked up to the girdle round the loins. His face is quite handsome, although the happy smile which the Āgamas and the Śilparatna prescribe for him in this context, is not clearly depicted here.[53] The third eye of Śiva is shown, as also the crescent moon on the right side of his head-dress. He has a makara-kuṇḍala in the right ear and a śankhapatra in the left one.

Immediately to the left of Kaṅkāḷanāthar is a swarthy stout bhūta (believed to be Kuṇḍōdhara) carrying on his head a vessel containing cooked rice; evidently, this is the food received in alms by Śiva. Still to the left of the bhūta, facing west is seen a woman ladling out rice into the vessel held by the bhūta by means of a spoon. The cloth worn by this woman is shown slipping down her loins.

To the right of Kaṅkāḷanāthar is shown another woman. The cloth worn by this woman too, is depicted as slipping down. The Samskṛit texts hold that it is out of irrepressible love and infatuation for Śiva that the clothes of the women appear slipping down. The height of the two women who are shown by the side of Kaṅkāḷanāthar reaches up to his chest. The women are adorned with abundant jewels and are handsome in appearance.

Perching on the head of the woman to the right of Kaṅkāḷanāthar, is a peacock holding in its beak a serpent. The hood of the serpent touches the trident bearing the Kaṅkāḷa. The peacock and the serpent have been skilfully sculptured in proper proportions, and, considering

53. It is said that the pearly teeth of Śiva should be half visible (T. A. G. Rao, Vol. II, part I, p. 303). That is not a feature found in the Śucīndram sculpture.

the small space within which they are depicted, this delicately carved piece is praiseworthy.

(2) *Vēṇu Gōpāla:* (Plate No. 12) : On the pillar at the right entrance to the Citra Sabha, corresponding to the Kaṅkāḷanātha image on the left, is the splendidly carved sculpture of Vēṇu Gōpāla. About 5′ 2″ in height, this figure, too, is of life-size. A peculiarity in the standing position of this Vēṇu Gōpāla, as distinct from others of its kind, is noteworthy. Though this figure is also sculptured with three bends, both the legs are kept on the same level and in the same position. Usually, Vēṇu Gōpāla has the left leg resting on the ground, while the right leg is thrown across, behind or in front of the left, so as to touch the ground with the toes. Evidently, the latter pose is natural for prolonged standing, and that, when all the time the concentration is on the play of the flute. Barring this drawback, the sculpture presents a charming pose.

The face of Vēṇu Gōpāla is quite handsome. His rapture arising from his own music is clearly, though in a subdued manner, reflected on his countenance. The flute is held by both the inner hands. His back left hand holds the conch and the right one bears the discus.[54] The decorative part of the sculpture is superb. It is surpassed only by the most splendid representation of Vēṇu Gōpāla on the Gōpura base. The crown (karaṇḍa makuṭa) is carved beautifully displaying skilled workmanship. Rich jewels around the neck, armlets and bangles all adorn the figure. There is a huge garland around the neck displaying the most intricate workmanship. The drapery of an under wear, which comes down to the knees is also carved minutely. Immediately to the left of Vēṇu Gōpāla is shown a cow with its calf, utterly lost in the sweet melody of the flute. Not only is the head of the cow turned towards the direction whence the music starts, but the expression on the face of the cow indicates its absorption and rapture.

Still to the left of the cow, on the eastern face of the pillar is depicted the familiar scene of 'Gōpikavastrābhaharaṇa',—the mischievous Kṛṣṇa taking away the clothes of the Gōpastris (cowherdesses) to the top of a tree while they were bathing in a pond. In the piece of sculpture, neither the pond nor the women plunged in it are shown, but at the top of the pillar is depicted a tree on which is seated Kṛṣṇa holding in his

54 Often Vēnu Gōpāla is depicted with two arms only. However, in the Varadarājasvāmy temple at Kanchipuram he is shown with ten arms, while another in the Viśvanāthasvāmy temple at Tenkāśi represents him with eight arms

hands several garments. In passing, it may be mentioned that the frolicsome boy Kṛsna has not been depicted with care ; it is a rather clumsy piece of work. At the foot of the tree is found a woman, a cowherdess, holding the trunk of the tree with her left hand and beseeching Kṛṣna to return the garment. Above, in between two branches of the tree is seated another naked Gōpastṟi touching the left foot of Kṛṣṇa and imploring his mercy. On the northern face of the same pillar is sculptured the figure of a naked woman with her hands raised above the head in anjali. Very likely, she, too, is a member of the party in the same ridiculous plight, begging for the kindness of Kṛṣṇa.

To the right of Vēṇu Gōpāla, on the western face of the pillar is found a carefully sculptured standing figure of a handsome woman. She holds a nīlōlpala flower in her left hand, while her right hand hangs down in the Kātyāvalambita fashion. Though she is shown only with two arms, she does not appear to be a Gōpastṟi. Probably she is a goddess. However, it is difficult to identify the goddess. If Kṛṣna is sculptured along with his consorts, they were two, Rukmaṇi and Satyabhāma. The Madras Museum sculpture of Vēṇu Gōpāla portrays these two consorts by his side. It is not possible to be more specific than to say that the figure represents probably one of the two consorts of Kṛṣṇa.

On the whole, the group of sculptures on the various faces of the pillar is admirable. Certainly, Vēnu Gōpāla, the central figure, is sculptured with the greatest care and skill. But the others are not too bad as side-shows ; nor is the sculpture of the Dēvī of poor quality.

(3) *Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava* (Plate No. 13.) : The southernmost pillar on the western wing of the Citṛa Sabha presents the marvellous sculpture of Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava. This depicts one of the main forms of dancing adopted by Śiva or Naṭarāja, the prince of dancers. The Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava is the unique dance in the course of which, Śiva lifts up his right leg as high as his head. The circumstance which led to this performance is found in the following legend.

Once a dispute arose between Śiva and his consort Kāḷi about their respective talents in dancing, each claiming greater proficiency than the other. They got Viṣṇu to arbitrate in the contest. Kāḷi imitated successfully all the varieties of dance attempted by Śiva ; and Visṇu found it difficult to decide. Eventually, Śiva had recourse to a ruse ; he lifted up his leg much higher than what the modesty of a woman would allow, and continued to dance. Kāḷi was unable to imitate him and Śiva was

declared the victor. It is believed that this Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava was first performed by Śiva at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, near Ārkōnam.

This mode of dance is described as '*Lalāṭatilakam*', because one of the legs is lifted up as if attempting to affix a tilaka mark on the forehead by the toe. In the Śucīndram sculpture also, the right leg is raised up to the crown, while the left one is slightly bent, the foot being placed over the crouching figure of Apasmāra. The latter, known also as Musalagan or Asamanja, is a swarthy hideous demon, the king of maladies or the personification of disease. Apasmāra is seen holding a serpent in his left hand, the hood of the serpent rising above.[55] It may be mentioned in passing that the hood of the snake is more prominently depicted in this sculpture than in similar ones at Tiruppanandāl, Tiruccengāṭṭaṅgudi or Tenkāśi, though the Taramaṅgalam sculpture of the Lalāṭatilaka dance portrays it very clearly.

The back right hand of Śiva holds the dāmaru (uḍukkai), while the front right one, kept in the abhaya pose, also supports his raised right leg. The back left hand holds fire, while the front left one presents the varadamudra. His neck, chest, waist, arms and legs show profuse ornamentation skilfully carved. His right ear shows the nakra-kundala, and the left the patra-kuṇḍala. The face is, no doubt, handsome, but it does not seem to express the vigour or animation which the context demands. The crown on the head is a splendidly carved one, and it presents the digit of the moon at the top.

To the right of Śiva on the face of the pillar are found the figures of Kāraikkālammai and to her right Visnu. The latter is playing on a drum (paṭāha) while Kāraikkālammai is keeping time with a pair of jālar (cymbals). The figure of Kāraikkālammai, the aged woman-saint, is sculptured with great skill. Her face is quite expressive of her ecstasy in witnessing the dance. The bones on the sides of the old woman are clearly depicted, and on the whole, this piece of sculpture is quite realistic.

On the northern face of the pillar is Brahmā, also holding the time-keeping cymbals. To the right of Brahmā is the figure of Patañjali,

55. The 'Kāśyapa Śilpa' of the 'Amsumat-Tantra' states that a serpent with raised hood is to be shown playing near Apasmāra on his left side, the right hand of the demon pointing towards it. However, in the Śucīndram sculpture, the right hand of the demon is not clearly depicted. It may be added that E. B. Havell mistook the hood for the wrist ornament of Śiva, which, he says, had dropped down in the course of the dance — See 'Ideals of Indian Art', p. 79.

sculptured on a miniature scale. The lower part of his body ends as the tail of a snake, and just above the head of Patañjali appears the hood of the five-headed serpent. The sages, Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, are often depicted as worshipping Śiva while he dances; in this sculpture Patañjali alone is shown. Vyāghrapāda is sculptured on an adjoining pillar. The various Samskṛit texts prescribe the numerous gods and goddesses who witness and co-operate with Śiva in his dance.[56] A few of the gods alone happen to be portrayed here.

(4) *Kāḷi* : (Plate No. 14) : On the southernmost pillar of the eastern row is found the sculpture of Kāḷi in the dancing pose. Appropriately, it stands facing the Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava sculpture on the western row. Indeed, from the assignment of prominent places for these sculptures, as also from the care and skill bestowed on them, it seems that Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava of Śiva and the dance of Kāḷi were intended to be the principal decorations of the pavilion. And it is but proper that these sculptures should appear in the "hall of dance" of the pagoda.

Kāḷi's dance, too, is excellently depicted. Both her legs are slightly bent and poised over a dwarfish swarthy figure, evidently, Apasmāra. The latter is shown lying with his legs planted firmly on the ground and the body bent and resting on his hands. Kāḷi's drapery, stretching down to her feet, is skilfully sculptured. Ornaments adorn her neck, body, waist, shoulders, arms, hands and legs. They are most vividly and dexterously depicted Kāḷi is shown with four arms. The back right hand holds a dāmaru and the back left a noose (pāśam), while the front right hand bears a trident and the left a kapāla. Her mouth shows the fangs protruding on either side, and she has a fierce look. Her Karaṇḍa-makuṭa, which is carved in a series of rising tiers, is flanked on either side by decorations suggestive of a flame of fire. Obviously, it is intended to add to the ferocity of her appearance.

On the southern face of the same pillar is a demon-like feminine figure, blowing the conch. To her south is yet another woman with handsome features. She is shown playing on the drum. These figures

56. For example, the 'Kāranāgama' states that all the Dēvas attended the dance and speaks of Brahmā playing on cymbals, Visnu on a patāha, Sarasvati on the lute, the Sun and Moon on the flutes, Tumburu and Nārada supplying vocal music and Nandi and Skanda beating drums. The 'Śiva Pradōṣa Stōtra' states that Sarasvati plays on the vīṇa, Indra on the flute, Brahmā on the cymbals, Viṣṇu on a drum, while Laksmi begins singing, all the gods standing round about. See T. A. G. Rao 'Hindu Iconography' Vol II, Part I, p. 233.

represent, beyond doubt, the party co-operating with Kāḷi in her dance and providing the musical accompaniments.

On the northern face of the same pillar is Nandiśvara in the standing posture. He is shown here with four arms; the two front hands are in anjali, while the back right hand holds the hatchet and the left the antelope. These are distinctly the symbols of Śiva; and Nandi, his devoted servant, is shown bearing them.

Bas-reliefs on the façades of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa: On the outer face of the four walls of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, there runs 2½ feet above the ground level, a narrow row of panels about 9 inches wide, presenting well-carved bas-reliefs. They depict scenes from the Purāṇas, the Itihāsas and other sacred lore. The very limited width of the space has restricted the size of the figures, which consequently, in certain cases, lack vividity and grace. But the difficulty involved in executing the bas-reliefs in the narrow space must not be lost sight of in estimating their artistic merit.

South: The bas-reliefs on the southern wall, for the major part, portray scenes from the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa as narrated in 'Bhāgavatam'. The first three panels at the westernmost end are at present within the enclosed 'Sub-Store.'

Panel (1): Viṣṇu is seated in Padmāsana; his back right hand bears the discus and the left the conch, while his front right hand shows the abhaya and the left the varada pose. To his left are found the four-faced Brahmā, Indra and a ṛṣi, all turned towards Viṣṇu with their hands clasped in anjali. Judged from the succeeding scenes, it is inferred that these three holy personages represent to Viṣṇu, the protector of the Universe, the hardships and misery that they suffer from the atrocities of Kamsa.[57]

Panel (2) Section 1: The first section in this panel is evidently the representation of a darśan that Viṣṇu grants to Vasudēva and his life-partner Dēvaki. Viṣṇu as Anantaśayana is splendidly sculptured. The great Lord tells them in their dream that he himself would be born of them as their eighth child, and, in order to avoid being slain by Kamsa, Viṣṇu wants them to transport the child immediately after birth to the cowshed in the house of Nanda. Leaving the babe there as if born of

57. Kamsa, son of Ugrasēna, became the ruler of Muttra on his father's death.



Nanda, the cowherd, and Yaśōda his wife, the child of the latter is to be taken over by Vasudēva instead.[58]

The second section of this panel pictures Vasudēva and Dēvaki with their new-born baby. The father eventually takes away the child to Nanda's house. The motherly instinct of Yaśōda rouses an agony in her mind.

Panel (3) : By divine will the shackles around the feet of Vasudēva who had been imprisoned by Kamsa, unloosen themselves, and Vasudēva holding the babe in arms, sets out at the dead of night. It is raining heavily amidst fierce thunder and lightning, but, Sēṣa coming behind them protects the babe by his widespread hood. The crossing of the river Yamuna is depicted.

The second section of the third panel is now completely hidden from view. Apparently, it shows Vasudēva leaving his son near the sleeping Yaśōda and his taking away her child, Aja, instead.

*Panel (4):*Several sections of this panel are devoted to the illustration of the exploits of the boy Bālakṛṣṇa. In section 1 of the 4th panel Nandagōpa and his beloved Yaśōda are seen seated close to each other. Yaśōda is having the baby Kṛṣṇa in her lap, and she fondles him. Just then Pūtana, the notorious murderess of infants, assuming the form of a handsome woman, turns up and requests Yaśōda to hand over the baby to her for a little while.[59] Yaśōda instinctively dreads the idea of handing over her baby to a stranger and refuses to comply with the request, while the unsuspecting Nanda persuades her to do so.

The divine baby gets an intuitive insight into the whole affair and rushes to the lap of Pūtana and begins sucking her milk. Suddenly, the real and the terrific form of Pūtana the demon appears, but Kṛṣṇa, by his divine power sucks her milk and eventually her life, and she falls down dead. Her actual death is not shown, though her intense

58 Kamsa, as is well known, was the cousin of Dēvaki, and on the occasion of the marriage of Dēvaki with Vasudēva, a mysterious voice had proclaimed that the eighth child of Dēvaki, would in fulness of time kill Kamsa. The wicked and perverse Kamsa at once sprang upon his cousin to slay her, when Vasudēva intervening, assured him that all the children born to Dēvaki would be handed over to him, and implored that the 'would-be' mother might be spared. Kamsa had, in due course, slain the six children born to Dēvaki. The seventh, born as Balarāma was under the care of Rōhini, the cow-herdess, while the eighth was Lord Krsna.

59. She was despatched thither by Kamsa who wanted her to kill the baby by suckling him with her poisonous milk. Pūtana was a notoriously wicked demon.



pain and agony during the time when Kṛṣṇa sucks her milk, is vividly portrayed. Unable to bear the agony, she is shown raising her hand to her forehead.

The third section depicts Kṛṣṇa overturning a chariot and attacking Cagaḍāsura, its owner, with his foot. This asura was another agent of Kamsa who came to attract Kṛṣṇa by means of his chariot and eventually to make short work of him. Again, Kṛṣṇa's own intuition apprises him with the real situation. A nicely executed piece of stone work, it brims with vigour. The effective thrust which Kṛṣna administers to the giant, the nonchalance with which Kṛṣṇa holds the left leg of the asura and the helpless plight of the latter are picturesquely portrayed. But there is an inaccuracy in this piece of relief. According to the Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa is said to have leaped out of his cradle to encounter Cagaḍāsura. That part of the scene is not depicted; further, Kṛṣṇa shown here, is not of such an age as to have been in the cradle. Here, he figures as a boy more than five years of age.

Panel (5) : Section 1. This shows Kṛsna in his favourite pursuit of stealing butter. In the midst of this escapade, Yaśōda arrives on the scene and reprimands him. *Section 2* shows the vexed foster-mother trying to beat him by the wooden switch, the churning instrument.

In *Section 3,* Kṛṣna is shown receiving some edible stuff from the hands of a smiling woman. It does not seem to be butter which is offered in his outstretched hands; further, the vessel from which it is taken, looks like a mortar; hence, probably, what is given to Kṛṣṇa is beaten rice or some other similar eatable.

Panel (6): Section 1 shows a woman leading Kṛṣṇa by the hand. Evidently, she has been hard hit by one of the mischievous pranks of the frolicsome lad, and she is taking him and the complaint to his mother.

Section 2 depicts a comic scene. The mother, losing all patience, attempts to thrash the mischievous lad. But adroitly he plays the loving son and begs for mercy seizing her hands and feet. The helpless mother has to content herself with deploring her owes; the hand that started on a frightful offensive, returns to her forehead in self-pity, resignation or despair! The complainant, shown at the back of the scene, is obviously bewildered at the turn of events, and is perhaps cursing her fate and the arbitrator to whom she reported the offence.

Panel (7): Section 1. Again, Yaśōda becoming desperate, ties him up to a mortar with a view to arresting his pranks. Kṛṣṇa's right foot



is fastened to the mortar. What variety the tree belongs to, and what the fruit that hangs down from it, are not clear from the bas-relief. The fruit is almost touching the back of crawling Kṛṣṇa. This particular part looks rather artificial.

Section 2. Undaunted by these shackles, the all-powerful Kṛṣna crawls on, and when the mortar is dragged along in between two trees, known as the 'arjuna' trees, they are uprooted. Out of the broken trees emerge the two Guhyakās, Nalakubara and Maṇigrīva.[60] The two handsome persons are seen emerging from the foot of the trees.

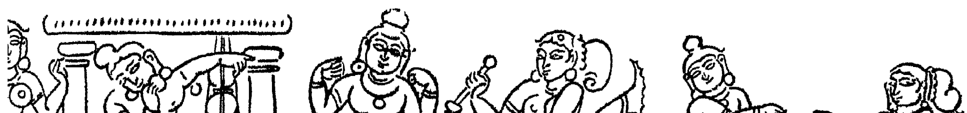
Section 3. Kṛṣṇa is pictured with his favourite comrades, the cows and calves. Gōpālakṛsṇa is in his true element, and gaily he walks behind them blowing his horn and throbbing with mirth and frolic. The part of the relief showing the cows and calves has not been executed with care. Indeed, it is more the context in which they appear, than the sculptural representation that enables us to fix the identity of these animals.

Panel (8): Section 1. This portrays another of the exploits of Kṛṣna. A demon, Varacāsura, transforming himself into a calf, aims at destroying Kṛṣna. Seeing through the contemplated trick, Kṛṣṇa gets hold of the calf by its hind legs and dashes it against a tree. The moment the calf knocks against the tree, he assumes his real form. Just on the other side of the tree, he is seen falling down with unbearable pain and agony. The fall of the asura is depicted with excellent effect.

Section 2. Kṛṣṇa's combat with another asura accomplice of Kamsa, is depicted here. The asura, Bhaka by name, assuming the disguise of a crane, intends to attack Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa takes firm hold of its two mandibles in both of his hands, and tears violently the mouth and the body of the bird, thus destroying the asura. This part of the relief displays vigour and virility.

Panel (9): The whole of this panel represents the familiar theme of 'Gōpika Vastrāpaharana'. During the month of Mārkaḻi, the young women in the park of Nanda celebrated pious observances in honour of Kātyāyani when they bathed in Yamuna early and worshipped the goddess. The everhappy Kṛṣṇa one day repairs to the river, and taking

60. They were the sons of Kubēra, the god of Wealth, and had been cursed by Nārada into trees as a punishment for their drunkenness. It was ordained that they would secure their ultimate redemption only at the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa.



away the clothes of the young women, hastily climbs up a nīpa tree and calls upon them to go up and take their respective clothes. Finding entreaties unavailing, they come out of the water covering their nudity with both hands. Again, they implore with clasped hands, and eventually he gives them their clothes. The scene is pictured with elegance and taste. The rising bunches of flowers are appropriately sculptured covering their nudity. And the women have been depicted in their rustic charm and innocent purity.[61]

Panel (10): Section 1 shows the boy Kṛsṇa standing with a lump of butter in each of his hands and with a charming smile on his countenance. A woman, obviously a gōpastṛi of Nanda's park, is seen seated by his side, and with hands clasped together, she entreats him to terminate the troubles that the wild serpent Kāḷīṅga was causing them. The sculpture of the woman is executed with marvellous skill.

Section 2 of the panel presents a mirthful dance of Kṛsṇa. The pose of the dance is properly sculptured.

Section 3 portrays the famous theme of Kāḷiṅgamaṛdaka or the crushing of Kāḷiṅga. It is a struggle between the all-powerful Kṛṣṇa and the deadly serpent, ' a scene which recalls the legend of Hercules and the Lernean Hydra '. After several deadly phases in the contest, Krsna, overpowering the serpent, takes his majestic stand on its broad hood and begins to dance. But here, the theme has been carved inaccurately; he is seen standing upon the body and not on the hood of the serpent. Nor can it be taken to depict an earlier phase of the struggle, because Kṛṣṇa would not have attempted a dance until the opponent was effectively subdued. Further, the five heads of the serpent are not shown in the hood. Perhaps, considerations of space have led to a simplified representation of the theme.

Section 4. The last of the sculptures on this panel portrays the theme of Kṛṣṇa killing the demon Prālamba, who had assumed the form of a palmyra tree. Kṛṣṇa, planting his right foot on the ground, knocks at the tree with his left foot. But, though it purports to depict a scene of energetic action, the carved piece lacks vigour. It looks more like Kṛsṇa placing his left foot on the tree in the course of his joyous dance rather than a violent attack on an enemy.

61. The Bhāgavatam speaks of seven Gōpastris who were subjected to this ordeal; but here only five are shown. Evidently, lack of space accounts for this.

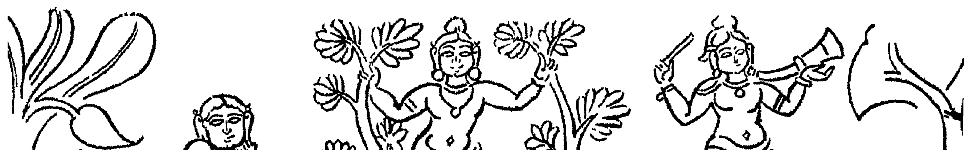


Panel (11). This entire panel is devoted to the sculpturing of Vēṇu Gōpāla, engaged in his rapturous play on the flute, and the spell-bound absorption of the cowherds and cowherdesses — nay, even of the members of the animal kingdom. It is one of the most brilliant pieces of art on the outerwall of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. Executed with patience and skill, it has afforded scope for the flights of fancy of the sculptor. In the centre of the panel is the hero standing with his left foot placed on the ground and the right one bent and resting behind it on the toes.

The accompanying figures have all been graphically sculptured; indeed, it is difficult to find yet another portrayal of Vēṇu Gōpāla in such a perfect setting, as is found on this panel. To begin with, immediately to his right is a serpent with its hood rapturously raised to its full height and enjoying the music spell-bound. Indeed, so perfectly engrossed is the serpent that it ignores a mouse which, in its turn, thoroughly oblivious of the danger, has perched itself right on the top of the snake's hood. It is the charm of the vēnu-gānam, the music that flows from the flute, which accounts for this strange phenomenon. To the right of the serpent is a woman cowherd holding in her left hand a lily, and so absorbed is she in the charming music that she fails to notice her saree slipping down from its proper position. Yet another sister cowherdess is sculptured to her right. And, at the farthermost end is a cowherd lost in the music. His poise is itself an eloquent indication of his absorption. With the right foot planted firmly on the ground, his buttocks resting on the trunk of a tree and his entire body thrown on the prop of a stick firmly held on the ground in front, he seems to lend not only his ears but his entire self to the mellifluous out-pouring of the flute. It is a fitting commentary to his absorption that, while he is drinking deep at the fountain of music, he ignores the pail of milk on his head, though there is a risk of its being upset by the overhanging branch of an adjoining tree.

To the left of Kṛṣna is a cowherdess holding up a full-blown lotus, accompanied by yet another cowherdess. The clothes of both the women are seen slipping down.[62]

62. In some other South Indian sculptures, for example, in that of Bhikṣādana-mūrti, this slipping down of the sarees is associated with a voluptuous infatuation for the person of the other sex. Certainly such an unholy idea cannot be imported into the innocent hearts of these admirers of Kṛṣna's music. Evidently, the sculptor depicts it merely as a sign of their all-engrossing absorption in the sweet music.



At the easternmost end of the panel are found cows intently listening to the flutist. They are shown with their heads lifted up in the direction of the sound flowing from the flute, not noticing their arch-enemy, a tiger, comfortably sitting by their side, himself enjoying the music.[63]

Panel (12): Section 1 depicts Kṛṣṇa as Gōvardhana-dhāra supporting Mount Gōvardhana, illustrating another famous exploit of Kṛṣṇa. Once Lord Kṛsna dissuaded the herdsmen from offering a sacrifice to Indra, and the latter, out of wounded pride, wrought vengeance by ordaining a thunderous downpour of rain. Realizing the cause of the phenomenon and the fright of the cowherds, Kṛṣṇa valiantly lifted and held up for seven days the hill beneath which the people were sheltered. Eventually, Indra witnessing the mysterious might of Krsna, withdrew from the struggle.

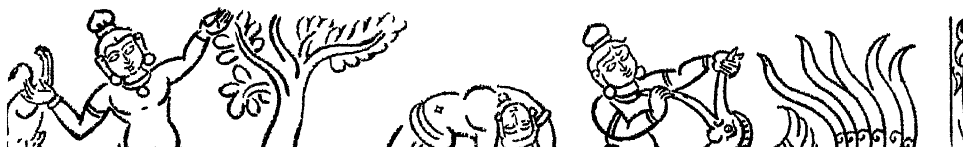
Section 2 of Panel 12 shows Kṛṣṇa combating with and eventually killing Khara, who attacks him assuming the form of a donkey. The piece of sculpture pictures him seizing the two jaws of the donkey's mouth and tearing it. It is a specimen of vigorous sculpture depicting energetic action.

Panel (13): Section 1 represents Indra paying his respects to and worshipping Viṣṇu. Indra bears in his outer right and left hands the weapons Vajram and a trident respectively, while his inner hands are engaged in decorating Viṣṇu with a flower. Viṣṇu himself is seen only with two arms, and seated in the padmāsana pose. This adoration of Viṣṇu was found necessary by Indra, because the latter had tried to defy Kṛṣṇa, the avatār of Visnu ; hence, it is by way of repentence that homage and obedience are rendered by Indra.[64]

Section 2 depicts the dance of Kṛṣṇa, holding in one of his hands the hand of a gōpi. Kṛṣna has made famous the gōpi-dance, and from the sculptures found here, it is seen that different postures and patterns are adopted in the dancing.

63. This elaborately sculptured panel contains one of the most picturesque representations of art found on the façades of the Cempakarāman Mandapa.

64. But there is a slight impropriety in this piece of sculpture figuring only after the Kharavadham by Krsna. It must have preceded it and appeared immediately after the Gōvardhana scene, as is found sculptured in certain temples.



Panel (14): Section 1 of this panel shows another and a different mode of dancing. Here, too, Kṛṣṇa is in the centre and he holds a gōpi dancer in each of his hands.

Section 2 depicts a solo dance by Kṛṣṇa, and the pattern is unique. It is what may be called pot dance (குடக் கூத்து), a mode of dance familiar even in the days of Cilappadikāram. Here, four small pots are shown passing along during the course of the dance, some resting on inconvenient parts of the body like the arm, the wrist and the knee. That, even in the 15th century A.D. this method of dance was not forgotten, at least in theory, is well borne out by the sculpture under consideration.[65]

Section 3 shows Kṛṣṇa and his elder brother Balarāma driving in a chariot to Muttra in order to encounter Kamsa. Akrura is said to be the driver. The horses are exceedingly fine-looking and energetic. Their galloping pose has been splendidly sculptured.

Panel (15) : The entire panel is devoted to the enactment of a scene in which a washerman is deprived of his newly washed clothes. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had reached Muttra, the residence of their uncle, Kamsa. On their way to the palace, a few cowherd boys meet Balarāma and beg him for some white clothes. Balarāma passes on the request to Kṛṣṇa. Just about that time the washerman, attached to the palace of Kamsa, is passing that way with the washed clothes of the king. Kṛṣṇa takes some from him and calmly passes them on to Balarāma to be given to the cowherd boys.

The washerman, perhaps, knew the might of Kṛṣṇa; however, his helpless surrender is skilfully portrayed in the sculpture. But it passes one's understanding why Balarāma should adopt such an imploring attitude towards his younger brother, however mighty the latter was. The cowherd boys, though rather shy, enjoy the situation, a feature exquisitely portrayed.

Panel (16): Section 1 of this panel shows Kṛṣṇa dealing with Tribhāku (i.e., the hunchback with three bends on her back) , the supplier of Kaḷabha or scented materials to the palace of Kamsa. Kṛṣṇa asks her to part with the materials of the toilet, and she consents. Pleased with her, he removes her deformity by stamping his foot on her back. That very moment she is transformed into an young handsome damsel.

65 See T. A. S., Vol. V, pp. 184-97 regarding this mode of dance.



Section 2: By this time Kamsa learns about the entry of Kṛṣṇa right into his capital city, and his mischievous pranks are taken to the king's notice. Driven to fury, Kamsa despatches post-haste four strong men to encounter Kṛṣṇa and make short work of him. Kṛṣṇa meets them; they prove no match to him. He seizes them, and vanquishing them, he holds two men tucked up in his arms and the other two in his legs between his thighs and calf-muscles. It is an exquisitely carved piece. The action is effectively depicted and the reaction splendidly pictured.

Section 3: Kamsa, mortified to hear of these occurrences, is seized by fear and anger, and in order to prevent the entry of Kṛṣṇa into his palace, commands his famous elephant *Kuvalayāpīḍa* to be stationed at the entrance. Kṛṣṇa encounters even the elephant and makes short work of it.

Panel (17): Section 1 shows Kṛṣṇa attacking the arch-criminal, Kamsa.[66] Rushing into the palace, with dagger drawn out, Kṛṣṇa seizes the jewelled crown of Kamsa and drags him out from the throne. A scene depicting vigorous action, it portrays effectively Kṛṣṇa's vehement attack and Kamsa's tremor and despair.

Section 2 contains the last stage of the struggle with Kamsa. He has been hurled down from his throne and Kṛṣṇa is on his back Having administered sufficient blows, Kṛṣṇa triumphantly stands on the back of his fallen victim. Here, in order to make the picture more complete, and to be in tune with the Purāṇic version, Balarāma should have been shown protecting Kṛṣṇa from the attacks of the bodyguard of Kamsa. In the Purāna itself Balarāma has been eclipsed by the overmastering glory of his younger brother; the sculptor has perhaps gone one step further by ignoring Balarāma altogether.

Section 3: The last of this series of reliefs presents Kṛṣṇa meeting his real parents, Vasudēva and Dēvaki, still within prison bars. Intimating to them the fact of Kamsa's end, Kṛṣṇa releases them. Both the father and mother are shown blessing their valiant son.

66. In strict conformity with the sequence of events narrated in the Bhāgavata Purāna, immediately after Krsna's encounter with the elephant Kuvalayāpīda there must have figured Krsna's entry into the royal store-house of arms and weapons, and the damages he causes there. And, closely following that, must have appeared the combat of Krsna with the court wrestlers, which is not found sculptured here.



Finally, there appear representations of well-known scenes similar to those noticed in other parts of the temple. They depict the conflict between Narasiṁha and Hiranyakaśipu, the figure of Viṣṇu seated on the coils of Ādiśēṣa, and several other familiar themes.

Bas-reliefs on the Eastern façade of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa: On the eastern wall there are but a few reliefs A considerable space is taken up by the two entrances into the Maṇḍapa as well as by the columns flanking them. Probably, because of the limited number of panels available, no continuous theme is attempted on the eastern or western wall. Even the stray reliefs are, for the major part, repetitions of figures sculptured elsewhere.

On the eastern façade, beginning from the southern side, it is found that the first two panels are devoted to the representation of the Vāmanāvatār story. The next is Kaṅkāḷanāthar, while the third is Narasimha. Farther up, beyond the northern entrance to the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa, appears the representation of the well-known story of Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār. A hunter, Tinnen, had been in the habit of offering water, flowers and meat every day to a Śivaliṅga in the forest. One day, seeing drops of blood flowing from the eye of the god, the devoted Tinnen tore out one of his own eyes to replace the one which Śiva had lost. But the next day, he saw the other eye of Śiva affected, and so, placing his toe on the spot where Kaṇṇappa's other eye could be fixed, he began to insert the knife into his remaining eye. Just at that moment Śiva, coming out of the Liṅgam, prevented him from taking the drastic step and blessed him.

The relief shows the Śiva liṅga with the eyes marked distinctly. Kaṇṇappa has his left foot raised and placed very near the left eye of Śiva, and is about to pluck his own. The statement made by J. Dubreuil in his 'Iconography of Southern India' (page 18) regarding the sculptural representation of Kaṇṇappa may be noticed in this connexion. He says: "We have never found it in monuments prior to the 16th century." It is known that the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa was completed in the 15th century, and undoubtedly these sculptures were carved then and not at any later time. Thus it can be asserted that the sculpture depicting Kaṇṇappa was in vogue even in the 15th century A.D.

The only other piece worthy of note on the eastern outer wall is that of an elephant represented as pouring water through his trunk on



a Śiva liṅga. It is evidently the story commonly associated with Tiruvānaikkāvu that is illustrated by this sculpture. In the temple of Jambukēśvara at Tiruvānaikkāvu the representation of the adoration of the Liṅgam by an elephant is found. Obviously, it is believed that it was in that place that the elephant performed abhiṣēkha on and worshipped the Śiva liṅga.

Bas-reliefs on the outer face of the northern wall of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa : Most of the sculptures on this side of the Maṇḍapa have as their themes incidents associated with Śiva. Omitting a few repetitions found in other parts of the temple, the undermentioned pieces may be noticed.

Panel (1): Viṣṇu getting the Sudarśanam: Quite an interesting representation on this side is that of Viṣṇu securing the Sudarśanam from Śiva after subjecting himself to a strenuous test. Viṣṇu worships Śiva every day by offering prayers to him to the accompaniment of 1000 lotus flowers. The first section of the panel shows him engaged in it. One serious flaw in the representation of Viṣnu in the sculpture is that he is already shown equipped with the Sudarśanam, the cakṛa or disc, a symbol which, according to the story, he receives only subsequently as a result of his prayers to Śiva. It is difficult to identify the figure immediately to the right of the Śivaliṅga, represented sitting in the Padmāsana as anjalihasta.

Panel (2): Here, the section on the right depicts a stirring scene. Viṣṇu offers nine hundred and ninety-nine lotus flowers in prayer to Śiva, but the thousandth one is missing. Annoyed at the experience, but undaunted, he suddenly begins to pluck his eye and offer it instead. Just as he is about to take the drastic step, a hand appears from the Śiva liṅga, restraining him from doing it.

The closing section of the panel shows Śiva offering Viṣṇu the Sudarśana cakṛam, the famous discus. Śiva, with his distinctive symbols, is found seated in the sukhāsana pose, and he presents the disc with his right front hand. Viṣṇu, standing by his side, graciously receives it from him. It is worthy of note that, while his outer left hand bears the conch, the outer right does not present the disc.

Panel (3): The Churning of the Ocean of Milk: In one of the central panels on the northern outer wall is depicted the picturesque



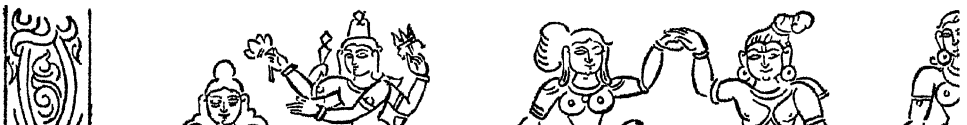
scene of the Dēvas and Asuras together churning the ocean. The legend runs as follows: The Asuras were once waging war with the Dēvas, but eventually on the advice of Brahmā, they made peace, and they were asked to combine with the Dēvas in churning the sea in order to obtain the ambrosia; the mountain Mandara was to be used as the churning stick and the snake Vāsuki as the cord.

Beginning to churn the ocean, Hari took the first place near the head of the snake and the Dēvas arranged themselves behind him. This was considered dishonourable by the Asuras, and so, they protested. The Dēvas, however, agreed to exchange places and held the tail of the serpent. While the sea was thus churned, the mountain which rested on nothing, sank by its own weight to the bottom of the waters, in spite of the efforts of the powerful gods. It was then that the great Lord Viṣṇu assumed the form of a kūrma (tortoise), plunged into the sea and upheld the mountain. When the serpent spat forth poison, the party was disheartened, but Śiva saved the situation by drinking it and holding it up in his throat. From the sea of milk, there came the famous cow, Kāmadhēnu, the horse Sabare, the elephant Airāvada, the tree Kalpaka vṛkṣa, and eventually, the sage Danvantari with a vessel containing ambrosia. When there arose a dispute in partaking of the ambrosia, Lord Visnu cleverly assumed the form of a handsome damsel, and got the ambrosia from the asuras and passed it on to the gods.

The bas-relief, under consideration, shows the hill, the snake, the tortoise and the churning. The gods are seen near the head of the serpent and the asuras near the tail. Perhaps, it represents the very initial stage of the churning, or the very last, when the gods had to come again to the side of the serpent's head as the poison was being emitted. Śiva, under the immediate influence of the poison, is seen falling down. Soon, he recovers from the effect of the poison and rises up.

The next panel evidently shows the Dēvī, who, holding the neck of Śiva, prevents the poison from getting down. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra, who too were, for a time, under the deadly influence of the poison, regain their position. That is also vividly depicted in the piece.

Panel (5) Section 1. The most fascinating set of panels on the northern wall deals with 'Vaḷḷi tirumaṇam', the marriage of Subrahmaṇia with Vaḷḷi. Starting from right to left, the first section shows the birth of



Vaḷḷi out of the womb of a deer. Vaḷḷi grows up, and in her youth she is employed by her parents to guard the field where corn is cultivated. One day, while doing so, Subrahmaṇia assumes the role of a hunter and suddenly appears on the scene. Vaḷḷi is naturally upset, although she is struck by the handsome appearance of the intruder.[67]

Panel (6): *Section 1* of the sixth panel shows Subrahmaṇia transformed into a Vēṅgai tree. Section 2 shows Subrahmaṇia appearing in the guise of an old man. He bribes one of the attendants to permit him to approach Vaḷḷi. In section 3, the old man is shown begging for food. Having received this, he asks for water to drink.

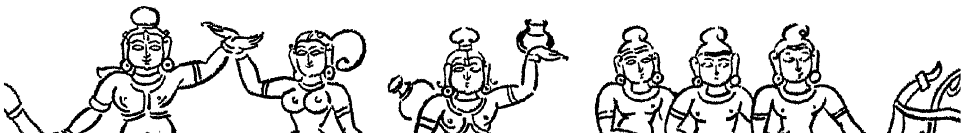
Panel (7): *Section 1* of the last panel shows Vaḷḷi indicating to the old man the pond a few yards off, where, he could help himself to water.

In *Section 2*, by the mysterious power of Subrahmaṇia, suddenly an elephant appears on the scene. And, poor Valli who has a mortal dread of elephants, suddenly clasps the old man, who, meanwhile, assumes his real form. The sculptor has represented Vaḷḷi's embrace of the old man in the most realistic manner imaginable. Of course, shortly afterwards, Subrahmaṇia announces that the danger is over, and on opening her eyes, she must have had another shock, perhaps not very disagreeable, in finding the old man transformed into the handsome youth.

That takes us to the last section, where Subrahmaṇia reveals his real form in his true divine aspect with his distinctive symbols. That leads to the consummation of the holy marriage. It would have been more appropriate if the sculptor had, in the last section, depicted Vaḷḷi in her properly dressed and richly bedecked form.

Certain unimportant items carved on the panels of the north wall and on the portion of the western wall are Kāla Bhairavar, Gajāhara-mūrti, Kāḷi, Śiva and Viṣṇu, Padmanābha in the Anantaśayana pose, etc. One of the splendid bas-reliefs on this wall is found in a panel which portrays the well-known theme of Mārkaṇḍa, the devotee of Śiva, being rescued from the clutches of Yama, the god of Death, by Śiva's power.

67. The order in which each Section of a Panel appears in the illustrations corresponds to that in the original.



Conclusion : The best sculptures in the Śucīndram temple belong to the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries A.D. The Cempakarāman Mandapa, the Ūñcal Maṇḍapa, the Gōpura base and the Citra Sabha, which arose during this period bear the best specimens, which can stand a favourable comparison with the most brilliant products of other places in South India. But the sculptures of the 18th and 19th centuries tend to show a decline. Except lineal carving and floral designs, the other branches of sculpture assume a rather stiff and conventional style. The sculptures in the Śrībalipura and Alaṅkāra Maṇḍapa not only repeat the themes found in earlier structures, but are characterized by a certain measure of rigidity and formalism.

The sculptors of the earlier epochs, beginning probably from the Cōla period, appear to have been imported into Śucīndram from the East Coast But, by the 16th century A.D., if not earlier, a body of experts appears to have existed in Nāñcinād. Kakkāḍ, Kōṭṭāṟ, Parakkai and Kariyamāṇikkapuram are villages near Śucīndram where sculptors have flourished for many centuries past. Perhaps, a large part of the sculpture of the Śucīndram temple is the product of their skill, although master craftsmen might have been occasionally imported from the East Coast.

An inscription, dated 26th Tai 720 M.E. (1545 A.D.) speaks of a Śilpi Kommanḍan Aśāri of Mummuḍiśōlanallūr (Kōṭṭāṟ) being honoured with the title of '*Ciṟpapurandiran*'. Very likely, it is Śucīndram, the 'Spiritual Capital' of Nañcināḍ, which afforded scope for the exercise of his skill.

The artists worked on 'dhyānaślōkās', or contemplative verses, which laid down the canons for the construction of images. These verses were adapted from the Āgamas, the Śilparatna and other Samskrit works.[68] The deviations in the sculptures from the texts are explainable by local traditions, by the lack of skill on the part of particular sculptors or, sometimes, by the variations in the texts, which were transmitted from generation to generation. On the whole, little scope was afforded for the artist to exercise his individuality. That accounts, in a large measure, for the domination of formalism and the decline of the art in later days.

68. It is claimed that, besides the Samskrit works, there existed an independent body of texts in Tamil. But to the best of my knowledge, no such work is extant now.



C H A P T E R X I I I

ICONOGRAPHY

The dividing line between the Iconography and Sculpture of a South Indian temple is not clear-cut, for the sculpture itself is dominated by images of gods and goddesses. However, in this chapter, we confine our attention to the enshrined images for which pūjā and oblations are offered.[1] They can be classified into the Dhruvabēras or fixed images and Bhōga-mūrtis or images used in connection with ceremonies. Generally speaking, the Dhruvabēras are carved in stone, while Bhōgamūrtis are metal images. There are a few exceptions to this rule, and they will be noticed in their proper places.

Dhruvabēras: The fixed images, in their turn, fall under various categories, in accordance with the deities represented by them. They are considered under the several heads indicated below and their distinct features described.

1. *The Liṅga form of Śiva:* Not less than half a dozen shrines within the temple present the Śiva liṅga. They are the cellas of

1. Images for which pūjās are offered daily, cannot be photographed under the laws in force in the State. Hence, descriptions are not accompanied by photographic illustrations.



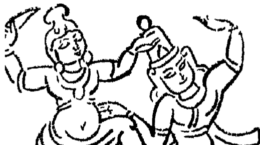
(a) Vaḍakkēḍam, (b) Konṟayaḍināthar, (c) Kailāsanāthar, (d) Jayantīśvarattu Mahādēva, (e) Rāmēśvarar and (f) Nārāyaṇēśvarar.

(a) The Linga at Vaḍakkēḍam, about 2½ feet in height, is cylindrical in shape. It is a sthāvara (fixed) and svayambhu (natural born) linga. It is neither carved nor polished but is an unhewn block of blue-black stone. A remarkable feature of this linga is that a light golden colour is said to be radiating from all over its sides. A compound of eight substances like dried kaḍukka (mirabulum), gooseberries, red earth, white sand, all powdered and mixed with gingili oil is used to fasten the liṅga to the pīṭha. The linga is re-fixed to the pīṭha (Āvaḍai) once in twelve years in order to ensure stability. The process of re-fixing the linga is known as "Aṣṭabandhanam", and it is a grand ceremony which lasts for twelve days.

Two costly gold masks for the liṅga, one in the form of a face covering the entire liṅga and the other in full human form, are found in the temple. The former mask which presents the facial features of Śiva in the form of a very old man or of a Maharṣi, is employed for daily use, while the latter which depicts the "Prasanna Dēva" form (exultant deity) is used on specially ceremonious occasions.[2]

(b) *Konṟayaḍināthar*: This image is not constituted by one liṅga but by three small unhewn pieces of stone appearing close to each other. The height of these liṅgas is slightly less than nine inches, and ordinarily, they are covered by one or the other of the two masks of silver available in the shrine. One mask presents three faces, while the other shows but a single face. During the early morning and the evening pūjās, as also on ceremonious occasions, the former mask is employed to decorate the liṅgas; at all other times, the single-faced mask covers the liṅgas. Their uneven appearance suggests that the liṅgas are of natural origin. Perhaps they are svayambhu formations at the foot of the Konṟai tree. It is surprising that the Sthalapurāṇa describes this as one liṅga, at the top, middle, and base of which, the Trimūrtis, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are embodied.

2. The mask in daily use is said to be over thousand years old, while the other one is believed to have been an endowment of Kārtikai Tirunāḷ Mahārāja (1758-98 A.D.). It is unfortunate that no record pertaining to these masks is at present available in the temple

(c) *Kailāsanāthar* or Kailāsattu Mahādeva: The striking feature about this small liṅga is that it is formed out of the rock itself on which the shrine stands. Both the liṅga and the āvaḍaiyār are shaped out of the rock and they are, therefore, absolutely immovable.[3] No mark of any kind is discernible on the face of the liṅga; yet, judged from the position of the pedestal and the structure of the cella, it seems to have been deliberately designed to face west. The image, about 1 foot in height, tends to assume a conical shape at the top.

The images in the shrines of Jayantīśvarattu Mahādēva, Nārāyaṇēśvarar and Rāmēśvarar (d), (e) and (f) are tiny Śiva liṅgas. Each of them is about one foot in height. Though no mark is found on the face of these liṅgas too, they are more evenly formed than the Kailāsattu Mahādēva liṅga. Unlike the latter, the liṅgas of the Jayantīśvara shrines are of cylindrical shape.

A consideration of the Śiva liṅgas in the temple takes us to an acute controversy raging round the exact significance of the liṅga. A vast literature has grown on the question. Several writers have sought to show that the Śiva linga does not belong to the phallic variety. But, one of the early specimens of the Śiva liṅga,[4] the one at Guḍimallam, which has been estimated to belong to the 2nd century B.C., distinctly indicates the phallic affinity of the Śiva liṅga. Perhaps the Hindus, like several other ancient people in the world, worshipped the phallus. Phallic worship might have developed as the union of the mysteries of generation with those of divinity and as the symbol of the mystic connection between sex-life and all generative phenomena.

II. *Aspects of Śiva:*

(a) *Dakṣiṇāmūrti:* Though sculptures of Dakṣiṇāmūrti appear on the panels of the Gōpura and on the faces of pillars, the only image enshrined is that found to the south of Konrayaḍi. Dakṣiṇāmūrti

3. This feature regarding the formation of the liṅga was not known even to the authorities of the temple until 1900 A.D. Only when an astabandham ceremony was performed that year, this circumstance was discovered. I am indebted to this piece of information to the Vattappaḷḷi Sthānikar.

4. See T. A. Gopinatha Rao. Hindu Iconography, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 66 ff—illustrations of the Gudimallam Linga. It may be observed that a Śivaliṅga is believed to be one of the relics of the Indus Valley Civilization. Its identity has not been, however, indisputably fixed



represents Śiva as a great master of Yōga. Among the four different aspects of Dakṣiṇāmūrti i.e., as a teacher of yōga, of jñāna, of vīṇa and of śāstras, this image at Śucīndram represents the Jñāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti, as is seen from the pose of his inner right hand.

Seated in the vīrāsana posture, he presents his inner right hand in cinmudra and holds a book in his corresponding left hand. The right outer hand bears a lotus and the corresponding left one a snake with its hood lifted up. The image bears a well-carved jaṭāmakuṭa on its head and ornaments on his neck, chest, waist, hands and legs. The face of this image is decidedly more handsome and graceful than that of Dakṣiṇāmūrti on a panel of the Gōpura base, noticed earlier.

(b) *Kāla Bhairava:*—Bhairava, enshrined in the northern Śrībalipura, is described as Kāla Bhairava, for, according to the Purāṇas, even Kāla, the god of Death, is afraid of him. Bhairava represents a ferocious aspect of Śiva; he is believed to punish the wicked and to atone the sins of his devotees. The name Bhairava is connected with 'Bharaṇa', which means protection. The image stands in the samapādastānaka pose, while his vāhana, the dog, is shown immediately to his back. The gait of the dog, however, seems stiff and conventional; the curvature of the dog's tail, too, is markedly artificial. Bhairava has four hands; the right outer hand holds a dāmaru and the left a pāśa, while the inner right has a triśūla and the inner left a kapāla. A waist ornament in the shape of a chain of small bells is seen a little lower than the waist. Around his neck, arms and wrists, well-carved ornaments are shown. The head-gear, jaṭāmakuṭa, is surrounded by flames rising in tiers. His face, with round ferocious eyes, and his mouth, with protruding side-tusks, together, present a fierce appearance.

(c) The so-called Cēravātal Śāsta, representing the deity known as Hariharaputra, or Ārya-Śāsta, is believed to have been born of Śiva and Viṣṇu when the latter assumed the form of Mōhini for the purpose of distributing the amṛita among the gods and the asuras. Here, Śāsta is seen seated on a pedestal with his right leg hanging down and the left one folded and resting upon the seat horizontally. On the knee of the left leg, the elbow of his outstretched left arm rests. The right hand shows the kaṭaka pose.[5] Ornaments are carved on his chest, hands and

5. The 'Amśumadbhēdāgama' prescribes four arms for Śāsta, while the 'Kāraṇāgama' prescribes only two.



legs. His head-dress is peculiar; it is shaped fan-wise like the petals of a dhurdhura flower. The Suprabhēdāgama states that the figures of his two wives should be shown on either side. Here this feature is not adopted.

II. *Dēvī:*—Besides the bronze figure of Aṛamvaḷattamman, which is also a dhruvabēra, the images of Dēvī carved in stone are found only in two shrines: one immediately to the south of Vaḍakkēḍam and another in the group of Jayantīśvara shrines.

(a) *Durga:*—The image of Durga, about two feet in height, is found in the standing pose as a dvibhaṅga i.e., with two bends. Her body, hands and feet are shown bearing the appropriate ornaments, while her head is adorned with a karaṇḍamakuṭa. She has four arms; the outer right hand holds a discus and the outer left a conch, while the inner right hand shows the abhaya mudra and the left a nīlōlpala flower. Carved with a handsome face, a well-developed bust and an attenuated hip, the image presents a graceful appearance.

The 'Suprabhēdāgama' states that Durga arose out of Ādi Sakti and that Durga is the younger sister of Viṣṇu. The Āgamas describe various forms of Durga; but of these, the one to which the image under consideration corresponds, seems to be the 'Vindhyāvāsi-Durga'. However, though the disposition of the hands and the decoration of jewels bear a similarity, Vindhyāvāsi Durga is said to be seated on a lotus. Moreover, it is required that the lion, her vehicle, should be standing near her and that Indra and other gods should be shown by her side. These prescriptions are not adopted here.

(b) *Jayantīśvarattu Gauri:*—The northernmost of the so-called Jayantīśvarattu shrines is dedicated to Gauri. This image of Dēvī is described as Gauri by the inscription recording the establishment of these shrines.[6] When the Dēvī is found by the side of her lord Śiva, she is known by the name of Gauri or Manōnmaṇi.[7] The image has

6. Appendix Inscription No. 76.

7. Here, the shrine of Śambhu or Śiva exists immediately to the south. Gauri is only another name for Dēvī or Pārvati; she is differently named according to her age. Thus, when she is worshipped as a nine-year old girl, she is Durga, and as a ten-year old girl she is Gauri The palm-leaf records speak of this shrine as that of Durga; it is inaccurate.



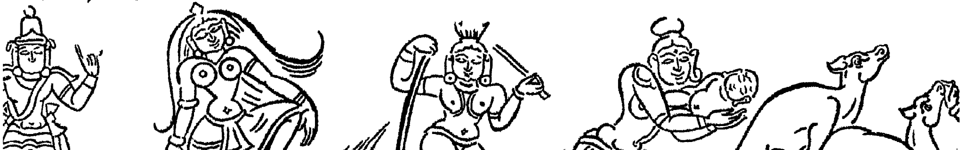
been shown only with two arms, and this feature accords with the Āgamic prescription that when the Dēvī is by the side of the Dēva, she is represented with two arms only. She holds a lotus flower in her right hand, while the left one hangs down by her side. The image of Gauri is sculptured in the perfectly erect pose of the samabhaṅga pattern. The 'Suprabhēdāgama' says that the image of the Dēvī should be shown with large and prominent breasts, and this feature is found here. As prescribed by the texts, she is shown wearing numerous ornaments.

(c) *Śrī Cakram:*—The shrine of Śrī Cakram presents the diagramatic representation of Śakti or Dēvī on a pedestal, which exactly resembles a balipītha, barely one foot in height. The Śrī Cakram is engraved on a plate and fastened to the upper surface of the pedestal. Regular pūjā is offered to the diagramatic representation and the belief is that Dēvī is worshipped in this form. Fortunately, a copy of the Śrī Cakram is reproduced on the panel of a pillar in front of the shrine itself; and hence, we are in a position to gather a complete idea of this symbolic diagram.

The 'Tantrasamuccaya' describes the Cakra as a figure consisting of angles and drawings resembling the petals of a lotus flower.[8] The Śrī Cakram in Śucīndram corresponds exactly to this description. The angles are formed by a number of straight lines cutting each other so as to produce a number of rectangular plots and terminating in ascending projections within a circle. Certain letters in Dēvanāgari script are carved on parts of the Cakra: these letters called bījākṣarās are believed to endow the Śrī Cakram with special efficacy. The diagram and the engraved letters, together, are said to possess a certain mystic potency.

III (a) *Viṣṇu in 'Tekkēḍam'.* The most prominent image of Viṣṇu in the temple is that enshrined in the cella of Tekkēḍam. A prodigious figure, well over 7 feet in height, it very nearly touches the ceiling of the garbhagṛha. The image is shaped out of the amalgum known as Kaduśarkarai and is permanently fixed as a Dhruvabēra. While it gives strength and durability to the figure, it cannot stand

8 See the diagram on page 330 of T. A. Gopinatha Rao· "Hindu Iconography", Vol. I, Part 11.



frequent washing. Hence the daily abhiṣēkha is performed only for the bronze images kept in front of the original vigraha. On the latter, 'Prōkṣana' or sprinkling of a few drops of water is all that takes place. The image is shaped with great care and it is considered a fine piece of art. The two outer hands of the image bear Śaṅkha and Cakra, while the inner right hand presents the abhaya and the left the kātyāvalambita mudras. The prabhāmandala on the head as well as the ornaments around the neck, the arms and the hands are all skilfully depicted. The face of Viṣnu, exquisitely shaped, radiates with charm and grace. There is a golden mask (aṅgi) for this image.

(b) *Paḷḷikondaperumāl:*—This image of Viṣnu in the śayana or lying pose, found in the south-west corner of the first prākāra, is one of the oldest icons in the pagoda. Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāl or Amarabhujaṅgaperumāl, as he is variously named in the inscriptions, is shown lying fully on his back. The entire body and the head are found resting flat on the coils of the snake, whereas in the case of Yōga-śayanamūrti or Bhōga-śayanamūrti, usually a fourth of the figure, from the head downwards, is slightly raised, the remaining three-fourths alone lying upon the serpent-bed. In fact, the Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāḷ of Śucīndram may be appropriately described as Abhicārikamūrti, represented as being in full slumber and therefore lying completely flat on Ādiśēṣa, which has its body coiled into two turns. Over the head of Paḷḷikondaperumāḷ, there appears the outspread hood of the five-headed serpent. However, the hood is not found raised high above the reclining head of the image. In fact, it looks conventional and inartistic. The face of the image has an age-worn appearance. He is shown with two arms only; the right hand is stretched to the right side, presumably appearing to reach the Śiva liṅga stationed close at hand. However, the Śiva liṅga fixed to the āvaḍaiyār, is posted about three feet away from the reach of his hand. His left hand is resting on his side.

Immediately to the right of Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāḷ is Lakṣmi seated in Sukhāsana, her left hand holding a lily and the right one showing the varada mudra. At the foot of the reclining image, there appear a small elephant and a bull, both carved in stone. On the western wall, about the spot which corresponds to the position of the naval of Paḷḷikoṇḍaperumāḷ, is sculptured a small figure of Brahmā seated on a lotus flower.



(c) *Kṛṣṇa:*—The image of Kṛṣṇa, one of the avatārs of Viṣṇu, figures in one of the Jayantīśvarattu shrines. Shown holding butter on both hands, the tiny figure represents Bālakṛṣṇa. His face, however, fails to depict him as a boy, though the small ponch and the chain of bells around the waist, are indicative of his tender age.[9] A small kirīṭa adorns his head.

(d) *Rāma and Sīta:*—The figures of Rāma and Śīta in the Rāmasvāmy Kōil, seated in Sukhāsana, are both of small size. Rāma's right hand presents the abhaya, while the left rests on his thigh. Sīta holds a nīlōlpala flower in her right hand, and her left hand, too, rests on her thigh. On the head of Rāma, there is the kirīṭamakuṭa, which indicates his royal position. Sīta has a karaṇḍamakuṭa, befitting her dignity. Other appropriate ornaments are also shown adorning the images.

It is worthy of notice that shrines bearing Rāma and Sīta in the seated position are not common. Except where Rāma's coronation is sculpturally represented, the image of this Avatār of Viṣṇu is invariably in the standing posture. The 'Viṣṇudharmōttara' and the 'Vaikhānasāgama' state that in the shrines of Rāma, the images are all shown as standing figures.[10]

(e) *Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa:*—The image of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, enshrined to the south of Tekkēḍam, stands in the samabhaṅga posture, facing east. As observed already, this composite image, combining the features of Śiva and Viṣṇu is not rare in South Indian temples. This image at Śucīndram conforms to the description found in the texts and presents the features of Śiva on the right half and those of Viṣṇu on the left. Among his left hands, the front one holds a conch and the back one a club, which is kept resting on the pedestal. The right outer hand bears the hatchet and the inner one the kaṭaka mudra. The drapery on the two halves of the figure also presents the difference. On the right side, from the waist, down to the knee, is represented the tiger-skin, while on the left, a silk cloth extends down to the feet. The head-gear shows the crescent-marked jaṭāmakuṭa on the right and an ornamented

9. Krsna alone, among the avatārs of Viṣnū, is worshipped as a child, a youth, and an adult. T. A. Gopinatha Rao; 'Hindu Iconography', Vol. I, Part I, p. 215.

10. Images of Rāma appear to have been common only after the 12th century. See Dubreuil: Iconography of Southern India, p 84.



karaṇḍamakuṭa on the left. On the right ear-lobe is found the patra-kuṇḍala worn by Śiva, and on the left, the makarakuṇḍala. But the ornaments on the body of the figure do not appear to show any marked difference. In the case of similar images, on the right half of the chest as also on the right arm, coils of snakes are represented; here they are not found.

IV. *Gaṇapati:*—It is not surprising that the temple presents several images of the popular 'elephant-god', Gaṇapati, at various parts of the pagoda. In respect of size, disposition of the hands, the symbols presented and the legendary associations, they vary from one another and, consequently form an interesting subject of study.

(a) *Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar:*—Doubtless, the biggest image of Gaṇapati in the temple is that enshrined in the Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar Kōil. This colossal figure, seated on the pedestal, is well over six feet in height and is justly described as 'Mahāgaṇapati' and 'Mukkuruṇi Piḷḷayār'. He is represented with ten arms, although the two pairs of outer-most ones are not visible on the front view. The hands on the right hold a cakṛa, a lotus flower, the gada, his own broken tusk and a fruit, perhaps a woodapple, while the hands on the left present the pāśa, ankuśa, a sugarcane and the ears of a paddy stalk. The outer-most left arm passes around the figure of 'Śakti-dēvī' who is seated on the lap of the god. His trunk holds a small pot, splendidly poised on the curvature formed by the tip of the proboscis. His tusks are prominently shown; that the right tusk is broken is also clearly noticeable. The inflated belly, the snake fastened around it, the trunk descending from the face and turned towards the left, the elephant's face and the short legs presented by the image, are all distinctive features of Gaṇapati.

Regarding the iconographic details of this god and particularly concerning the disposition of his hands, a certain degree of variation exists between the texts of 'Vighnēśvara pratiṣṭa vidhi' and the 'Mantramaharṇava'. Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar of Śucīndram adopts, to a large extent, the prescription of the latter text.[11]

Śakti Dēvī is seen passing or attempting to pass her right arm around the back of Gaṇapati; she holds a lotus flower in her left

11. See T. A. Gopinatha Rao: 'Hindu Iconography'—Vol. I, Part I, p. 56.

hand. The figure of the Dēvī is hardly one-eighth of the size of the Vināyakar. However, it is remarkably well-carved, the face presenting a handsome appearance.

(b) At the foot of Nīlakaṇṭha Vināyakar is the tiny figure of Gaṇapati, hardly one foot in height. It is not known how it finds a place there; however, the disparity between the two images is remarkable. The small image is found seated in the characteristic fashion with the two legs folded sideways. Represented with four arms, this Ganapati holds an ankuśa in his outer right hand and a pāśa in his outer left, while the inner right presents abhaya mudra and the left a mōdaka (a sweet preparation believed to be specially liked by Gaṇapati), which is contacted by his trunk. The elephant's face, the protruding belly and the tusks are all shown; only the snake around his stomach is not depicted here.

(c) *Vallabha Gaṇapati*: The wonderful form of Ganēśa, called 'Vallabha Gaṇapati' in Śucīndram, but really identical with Uccișta Gaṇapati of the texts, is enshrined on the western panel near the entrance to the Citra Sabha. The most striking feature concerning this image is that Gaṇapati's proboscis is seen stretched towards the genital organ of a woman standing to his left.[12] Legendary lore current in the place associates this form with the combat between Gaṇapati and Sūrapadma. But the accounts given by the 'Kriyākṛamadyōti', the 'Mantramaharnava' and 'Uttarakāmikāgama', while differing from each other in detail, do not connect this legend with the Ganapati in this form. On the other hand, these texts describe the woman by the side of Gaṇapati as a goddess; the 'Uttarakāmikāgama' speaks of her as Vighnēśvari. In fact, the Śucīndram image seems to resemble Uccista Gaṇapati by whose side the nude Dēvī is sculptured.

The image is found seated in Gaṇapati's characteristic sitting posture. He has four arms; the right upper hand holds an ankuśa and the lower one a lotus flower, while the left upper hand bears a mōdaka and the lower one passes around the goddess. The Dēvī holds the lily in her left hand and touches the god with her right arm.[13]

12. See ante pp. 76-77 for the legend connected with Vallabha Gaṇapati.

13. See T. A. Gopinatha Rao· 'Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 53-55. Her right hand is not shown touching the genital organ of Ganapati, as is found in some cases, for example, in the Nāgēśvarasvāmin temple at Kudandai (Kumbakonam).

(d) *Mūḍu Gaṇapati or Brahmarūpa Vināyakar*: The very small image of Gaṇapati found in the shrine to the north of Tekkēḍam seems quite an old one. The features on the face show a worn-out appearance. The trunk of Ganapati looks flattened, which, however, is not due to the age of the image, but is a feature of the original design itself. Only four arms are shown; each of the outer hands holds symmetrically a stalk of the paddy (plant), the top of which reaches the ears of Gaṇapati. The right lower hand, resting on the knee, bears a mōdaka, while the left one rests on the folded leg. The kirīṭa, which happens to be nothing more than a conical head-gear with little of ornamentation, appears worn out. The popular belief, which is corroborated by certain records of the temple, holds this Ganapati as representing Brahmā. While the appellation, 'Brahmarūpa Vināyakar', indicates the fact, the alternative name, Mūdu Ganapati, probably signifies the basic or original Ganapati. Perhaps, the fact that it was the earliest representation of Gaṇēśa in the temple accounts for this name.

(e) *Dēvēndra Vināyakar*: Curiously enough, the image of Ganapati described as Dēvēndra Vināyakar, which is found in the shrine near the Nīrāli, resembles Mūdu Ganapati in its size and features. There are the same features: the flattened trunk, indistinct facial features and the absence of the mouse, the vāhana. But it is rather surprising that the figure of a small elephant is placed in the Sukhanāsi Mandapa, facing the deity. A little to the east, in the open space is a bull in its typical pose. It seems that originally no vāhana for the deity was shown and that only later, the elephant, in order to emphasize the association of the deity with Indra, was set up. Local tradition supports this view. The figure of the bull, too, appeared at a late stage; but its significance in front of Vināyakar is by no means clear.

(f) *Sākṣi Gaṇapati*: On the face of the easternmost pillar to the south of the entrance of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa is a low relief sculpture of Gaṇapati. Carved in its characteristic sitting pose, this image is but a foot high. Among the four hands, the upper right one holds the ankuśa, and the upper left a pāśa, while the lower right shows the abhaya mudra and the corresponding left a mōdaka, which is being contacted by Gaṇapati's extended trunk. The eyes and the tusk are not distinctly perceptible, because the image is well nigh five centuries old, and what is more, through frequent abhiṣēkhas, the face has become worn out. A couple of mice, disproportionately big for the size of

Gaṇapati, is found carved facing him. It was under the auspices of this god that the Pratyayam was held, and hence the name Sākṣi Gaṇapati. To this day, pūjā is performed and oblations are offered to this deity twice every day.

(g) *Gaṇapati in the Śāsta shrine*: One of the very old images of Gaṇapati in the temple is that found in the corner of the Cēravātal Śāsta shrine. The eyes, the tusk, and other features of the face are absolutely indistinct. The outer right hand probably holds a flower and the corresponding left one a pāśa. The inner right hand presents the abhaya mudra, while the corresponding left holds perhaps a mōdaka which is being contacted by its outstretched trunk. As suggested earlier, probably this image was originally the principal deity in the shrine, and Śāsta has been set up there later.

(h) *Udayamārtāṇḍa Vināyakar*: This image, enshrined on the outskirts of the pagoda, is of generous proportions, and from the point of view of size, it ranks second only to that of Nīlakantha Vināyakar. About four feet in height in the sitting position, the image is correspondingly huge in girth. The outer hands hold the ankuśa and pāśa and the inner hands the daṇḍa and the mōdaka. The mōdaka in the left inner hand is being touched by the tip of the trunk. A small mouse, disproportionate to the size of the image, is shown squatting in front. Probably this image was carved about 720 M.E. (1545 A.D.)[14]

Thus several representations of Gaṇapati figure in the pagoda. Whether as a protecting deity, as a witness of the ordeals or as a personification of Brahmā, the image of Gaṇapati has certain common characteristics. Features like the short stature, the rotund belly, the trunk and the two tusks the left of which is broken at the end, are common. But differences, too, are found in the size, the disposition of the hands, and the symbols carried.

Subrahmaṇia: Subrahmaṇia is not so ubiquitous as the more privileged elder brother. Only two enshrined images are found in the whole temple, although on several panels of pillars, the sculpture of the deity figures. The image in the Subrahmaṇiasvāmy Kōil appears in the abhaṅga standing pose flanked on his right by Vaḷḷi and on his left by Dēvasēna. The peacock, his lovely vāhana, is shown standing

14. See ante Chapter V, p. 130.

in his front with its wings folded. Subrahmaṇia's two hands present the abhaya and varada mudras. Across his right shoulder is kept a silver śūla, the traditional weapon of the deity. Ornaments are depicted on his chest and hands. His head-dress, in the shape of a crown, is skilfully carved. His face is doubtless graceful and youthful in appearance.

The two consorts standing in the tribhaṅga pose are carved splendidly. A concentric scheme of chains is shown around the neck, while anklets and wristlets adorn the arms and hands of each figure. Their kēśabandhas, too, are skilfully executed. Both the Dēvīs bear a lotus flower in the right hands, while the left hands are allowed to hang by the side of the left thigh.[15]

(b) The other image of Subrahmaṇia, found in the niche to the east of the entrance to the Citṛa Sabha, is a smaller one. Shown riding on the peacock, the image presents a sprightly appearance. The gait of the peacock and its wing, spread out fan-wise at the back of the rider, are picturesquely depicted. The face of the image shows that the figure represents Bāla (boy) Subrahmaṇia. Perhaps, that is the reason why the Dēvīs do not find a place by his side.

Metal Images : Most of the metal images in the pagoda are Bhōgamūrtis. The only exceptions are the images of Sabhāpati, Kaṅkālanāthar and Aṛamvaḷattamman. These three Dhruvabēras, cast in bronze, may be considered first.

(1) *Sabhāpati* : At present, the shrine of Sabhāpati contains, besides the icons of Sabhāpati and his consort, several bronze images like those of Gaṇapati, the four Śaiva saints, and Astra dēva. It is not possible to determine the age of these Bhōgamūrtis. But, there is no doubt that the principal images, namely, of Sabhāpati or Naṭarāja and his consort, belong to the early part of the 12th century A.D., by which time, the shrine of Kūttāḍumdēvar had appeared.

The bronze image of Sabhāpati, the lord of dance, about 2½ feet in height above the pedestal, is a splendidly executed specimen in the

15. It is uncommon in the West Coast temples to present the consorts along with the male deity. Though this shrine was constructed only after the advent of the Malayāli brahmins into Śucīndram, it seems that the images were set up in the manner common to Tamil Nād.

Nṛittana or dancing pose. While his right leg, slightly bent, is planted on the asura, Apasmāra, who lies holding a snake in his hand, Naṭarāja's left leg is lifted up, somewhat turned towards the right leg and kept across it, depicting the dancing gait. The image of Natarāja is adorned with a chest-band, a yajñōpavīta, anklets on his ankles and rings on all fingers. On the head is a shining jaṭāmakuṭa from which issue six jaṭas, stretched sideways. There appears the ornament of the crescent moon on the left side of the jaṭāmakuṭa over the top of which is found the figure of Gaṅga.

Of the four arms, the back ones stretch out towards the elegant prabhāmaṇḍala or halo encircling the image.[16] The back right hand holds the drum which is adorned with snakes, while the inner right hand is raised up, the fingers pointing upwards in the position of abhayahastam. The back left hand holds a vessel containing the sacred fire and the other left hand, as noticed above, is stretched in the opposite direction, the fingers hanging down. The smiling face of Naṭarāja radiates with energy and joy.

The conception of the dancing form of Śiva is essentially Tamiḻian, and it is in Tamil Nāḍ alone that we find this splendid image. The significance of the dance of Naṭarāja has been expounded by poets, philosophers and artists. Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy has summed it up thus: "The essential significance of Śiva's Dance is three-fold: First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is represented by the Arch. Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the Countless souls of men from the snare of Illusion: Thirdly, the Place of Dance, Cidambaram, the Centre of the Universe, is within the Heart."[17] It is held that every one of the symbols presented by dancing Naṭarāja is intended to convey the truth that Śiva performs the dance in order to release the souls of men from the illusions of distraction and evil desire.

(2) *Kaṅkāḷanāthar*: One of the best metal images in the temple is that found in the so-called Kaṅkāḷanāthar shrine. The image seems to be a representation of Bhikṣāḍanamūrti, although as observed earlier, the difference between these two aspects of Śiva, is but little. It is on

16. The prabhāmaṇḍala represents the ring of fire within which Śiva is believed to be dancing his perennial dance.

17. Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy: "The Dance of Shiva", p. 93.

a bronze pedestal, rectangular in shape, about 1½ feet long and 1 foot wide, that the image stands 2½ feet in height. With the left leg in the erect posture and the right one slightly bent, the image presents a walking position. The figure is naked; only a snake is shown tied round the waist, a fact suggesting the identification of the image with Bhikṣāḍanamūrti. The four hands are shown with the symbols associated with the Bhikṣāḍana form. The right upper hand holds the drum, while the lower one elegantly hangs down appearing to touch the antelope which stands on its hind legs. The left upper hand shows the kaṭaka pose, while the lower one holds a small kapālam. The jaṭāmakuṭa on the head, bearing the digit of the moon on the left, is carved exquisitely.

To his left is the short stout figure of Guṇḍodara, raising both the arms upwards. The position of his hands suggests that they are intended to carry a vessel. The images of Bhikṣāḍana and of the accompanying figures are bright and shining, unquestionably brighter than even the image of Sabhāpati. Evidently the higher proportion of gold in the casting of these images explains this feature. The total effect is superb. The colour of the images and the masterly execution of the work have contributed to make this group a gem of art.

(3) *Aṛamvaḷattamman*: The Aṛamvaḷattamman image of bronze belongs to the middle of the 15th century A.D. In the samapādastānaka standing pose, the image is about 2½ feet in height. She holds a lily on her right hand, while the left hand hangs down by the side of her thigh. Appropriate ornaments are shown adorning the figure. Her head-dress is skilfully carved. Nevertheless, the image lacks grace. The face is sculptured in an inartistic manner, while the cheeks are found to be disproportionately stout and long. The image is not shining or bright; it presents the colour of a rather dark tinge of bronze. On the whole, there is little doubt that this is one of the inferior specimens of bronze sculptures in the temple.

Śucīndaperumāḷ: Among the Bhōgamūrtis of the pagoda, the group of images found in the shrine of Śucīndaperumāḷ seems to be about the earliest in date. As mentioned before,[18] the two principal images cast in the same frame were set up in 1126 A.D. The separate image of Umayammai is perhaps identical with the 'talaimagaḷmātu'

18. See Chapter V, p 119.

established in 1102 A.D. Śiva is seated in Sukhāsana bearing the hatchet and antelope in the outer hands, while the inner ones present the abhaya and varada mudras. Pārvati is not seated on the lap of Śiva as in the representations of Umamahēśvaramūrti, but slightly away to his left, she is in Sukhāsana. She holds a lily in her right hand, while her left hand shows the abhaya mudra. Standing in front of Pārvati on a lower pedestal, is the other bronze image of Umayammai. She bears a lily in her right hand, while the left one hangs down by her side in the Kātyāvalambita pose.

All the three images noticed above, are excellent specimens of bronze, similar to icons of the 12th century. The jewels on their body, ears, hands and legs, as well as their head-gears have been carved with care and skill. However, viewed from the standpoint of lustre and grace of the facial expressions, they seem to rank inferior to the Sabhāpati or Kaṅkāḷanāthar images in the temple. The icons in the Sucīndaperumāḷ shrine are very old and they are frequently taken out in connection with the Utsavas. Therefore, the outer masks of the 'Sucīndaperumāḷ' images (Siva and Pārvati seated on the pedestal) became worn out with age and had to be provided with silver masks in 1935 A.D.

Śrībali Images: Two Sribali images, one of Siva and another of Viṣṇu in the standing posture, are found within Vaḍakkēḍam and Tekkēḍam respectively. Only about a foot and a half in height, both of these silver images have been purposely cast on a small size so as to facilitate being carried in the daily Sribali processions. Well carved with their respective symbols, both the figures present an elegant appearance. However, they belong comparatively to a recent epoch. It is unfortunate that the temple records do not throw any light on the exact date of their origin. Local tradition has it that, sometime in the latter part of the 18th century, the older Śrībali images were substituted by the present group. The features of the existing images seem to support the popular report.

Images of Viṣṇu:—In the Tekkēḍam shrine, there are three groups of metal images. One is the silver Śrībali image. Another is the bronze image of Viṣṇu, employed in connection with the Utsavas. The third is the group of bronze images showing Viṣṇu in the centre, flanked by Śrī Dēvī and Bhū Dēvī on either side. The last group sta-

tioned in the middle of the shrine serves practically as the stāvara images. Abhiṣēkha is performed only for these images and not for the principal one cast in kaḍuśarkarai. While the Utsava image presents Viṣṇu in Sukhāsana, the stationary images are in the Samapādasthānaka standing pose. The Utsava image is ascribable to the period prior to the 17th century. Probably, it appeared when the Utsava was first instituted in Tekkēḍam. But the group of images stationed in the centre arose definitely about the middle of the 18th century, for they were set up by Bālamārtāṇḍavarma. It may be observed that the Utsava image of Viṣṇu is by no means one of the first-rate specimens of metal icons in the pagoda. On the other hand, the 18th century images stationed in the centre have been carved with skill. Bearing their respective symbols and presenting clear-cut graceful facial features, these form some of the best specimens of modern metal images.

Bronze figures of Śaiva devotees (Plates Nos. 29, 30 *and* 31):—A group of bronze figures representing Śaivite saints and devotees is found on a raised stone pedestal at the western end of the Ardhamaṇḍapa in the Pērambalam shrine.[19] The local report is that, in the shrine, there existed in times past several bronze images of Śiva in different forms as well as images of all the sixty-three Śaiva saints of fame. At present, however, all but twenty-three are missing.

Among the existing bronze icons now available a fine specimen is that which presents the combined images of Śiva and Pārvati in the standing pose. Pārvati is seen leaning on Śiva's left shoulder, and Śiva running his left arm around the Dēvī's back. Śiva's left outer hand has the frolicking deer held in between his 1st and 2nd fingers, while the inner one rests touching the arm of the Dēvī. His outer hand shows the gaja-hasta form and the inner the abhaya. The Dēvī's pose is most exquisitely carved. She assumes the dvibhaṅga form, the bend of her body being skilfully represented. Her right hand shows the kaṭaka hasta, while her left hand hangs by her side. The drapery, ornaments and the head-dresses of both the images are carved with care. Above all, their faces present their characteristic charm. There is little doubt that this representation of Umāmahēśvaramūrti in the

19. As observed earlier, "Pērambalam", dedicated to Naṭarāja, is located in the South Street. Described as a 'Kiḻīdu' shrine of Sthānunathasvāmy, it has formed a unit of the main temple.

standing pose constitutes one of the excellent pieces of bronze iconography in the shrine. (*Plate No. 32*).

The existing collection of bronze images in Pērambalam includes those of the celebrated Saiva saints like Tirujñanasambandar, Tirunāvukkaraśu, Sundaramūrti, Māṇikkavācagar and Śiruttoṇdar. It is not easy to identify the rest in the group. Though all the figures are products of skill, it is not possible to rank them as specimens of first-rate South Indian Bronzes. Compared with the celebrated models of the Cōḷa epoch found in several places of South India, they are unquestionably inferior in point of artistic merit.

The question of determining the age of the Pērambalam bronzes is beset with difficulties. Doubtless, the Naṭarāja shrine of Pērambalam arose earlier than the 16th century A.D. The inscription on the lintel of the pavilion in front of the shrine registers that in 772 M.E. (1597 A.D.), Puttillam bestowed a gift on the temple. Long before that, the inner shrine could have appeared. Popular tradition ascribes, curiously enough, the erection of the shrine to Tirumala Nāyak. This is anything but true, for Tirumala came into contact with Śucīndram later. Is it possible that Tirumala Nāyak presented these images to the temple, and that, tradition in a vague sense attributes the erection of the shrine itself to him ? Perhaps so. In the present state of our knowledge, nothing more than a conjecture is possible. The fact that he was the last outstanding ruler from the Tamiḻ Nāḍ to be connected with Śucīndram, lends support to this suggestion. Further, the known history of bronze sculptures in South India shows that the art was definitely on its decline after the 17th century. Thus, the figures of the 63 saints at Śucīndram are assignable to the 17th century, probably to Tirumala Nāyak's period.

The setting up of metal images either as dhruva-bēras, or more commonly as 'Utsavamūrtis' (images used in connection with ceremonies) was common in South India from early times. The practice of endowing bronze figures or quasi-portraits of the Śaivite canonized saints was adopted in the various temples of South India since Rājarāja's time. The art of casting metal images, though known much earlier, came to be more popularly adopted after the 10th century A.D., and it attained the height of perfection during the heyday of Cōḷa supremacy i.e., the 10th to the 13th century A.D.

In various villages, particularly in those situated near temples, there flourished Sthāpatis or workers in metal.[20] It is probable that in the earliest stages, the bronze figures like those of Śucīndaperumāḷ, Umayammai, and Sabhāpati enshrined in Śucīndram, were cast by Sthāpatis hailing from reputed centres in Cōla or Pāṇḍi Nāḍ. But, it is likely that soon the artisans or Kammāḷars in Kōṭṭār, Vadaśśēri, and Parakkai near Śucīndram took to this art. The family of Śāttayyan Āśāri traces its antiquity in Vadaśśēri for well over 500 years; and this family has been associated with the Śucīndram pagoda for a long period. Other ancient families are flourishing in Kōṭṭār, too.

The manner of casting metal images is interesting, and as learnt from Śāttayyan Āśāri, the 72 year old Śilpi connected with the Śucīndram pagoda, it is as follows. The bronze images, which are most common, are cast out of an alloy, composed of gold, silver, iron, copper and tin. Of the metals used, copper forms the largest part. About 93% of the amalgum consists of copper, 4% brass, 2% tin and 1% or slightly less of gold and silver. The tendency is to minimise the quantity of the precious metals to the utmost extent possible.

At first, the figure to be cast is modelled in wax. Then, the wax-model is covered with a thick coating of soft clay which is kept in an upright position by wires. After a few days, the wax is melted away by the application of heat; and that leaves a hollow cavity into which the alloy is poured. The clay coating is removed after some days, by which time the metal becomes set within the model. Finally, the chiselling and polishing are executed. The casting of images in other metals like copper, silver or gold is effected in the same manner; only the proportion of the metals varies correspondingly.

These śilpis in South Travancore, as in other parts of South India, employ Dhyāna-ślōkas or meditative verses during the process of casting the images. The South Travancore artisans use, for the most part, ślōkas contained in 'Mayamata' and 'Tantrasamuccaya Śilpa'.

Conclusion:—Iconography in Śucīndram, as in the rest of South India, is entirely religious, and it has been governed not by the fancy of the artist but by set rules and canons. In a large measure, that

20. See Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy: "Indian Craftsman", for a history of the caste of Kammālars or Viśvakarmās, the Sthāpatis of South India.

explains why sculpture and iconography sank to a stereotyped repetition of conventional forms in later ages.

However, some of the unsympathetic observations made by early European art-critics are too wide of the mark. Such views have arisen largely because of their inability to appreciate the religious and philosophic background of Indian art. The numerous hands and faces and the extraordinary poses of the sculptured figures have bewildered Westerners. Further, they urged that the anatomical details of the figures like veins are not depicted, a feature strikingly contrasted with Greek ideals. But this is purposely prohibited by the Hindu texts. The 'Śukranīti', for example, states that the veins of the legs and feet, as also the particular joints of the gods, must not be shown by the artist.[21] Above all, appreciation of art, particularly when it is yoked to religion, cannot be governed by any absolute criterion. Once this is realized, there will be a better appreciation of the fact that 'Indian sculpture and Iconography do not form freaks of Asiatic barbarism' but constitute products of the religious faith of an ancient people.[22]

21. See 'Śukranīti', Chapter 4, Section 4, Ślōka 161. See also Mulk Raj Anand "Hindu View of Art," p. 40.

22. Certain European scholars have justly denounced the wild criticisms of earlier writers. See, for example, Sir John Woodrofe's Foreword to O. C. Ganguly's South Indian Bronzes. He says. "It has been the fashion amongst European art critics to decry the merits of Brāhmanical sculpture on the ground of the alleged monstrosities of the Hindu puranic conceptions, which it has been said, are incapable of artistic treatment ..Indian Sculpture is not a freak of Asiatic barbarism, but is a worthy representative of a school of aesthetic performance as logical, articulate and highly developed as those of any country in Europe, ancient or modern."

C H A P T E R XIV

PAINTING AND OTHER ARTS

Section 1 : Mural Painting

Mural Painting in the temple is confined to the inner walls of the Gōpura. The only exception is found on the walls near the northern entrance to the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa. This mural painting appears to have been of a high quality. But unfortunately, white-washing has been carried on so indiscriminately, that nothing but a faint trace of it is now visible. The only figure dimly discernible is that of an elderly person with a long flowing beard. Whom the painting depicts there is absolutely no means of knowing. But even that small patch is sufficient to reveal that the quality of the painting found on the two walls is of a high order. It seems to resemble the celebrated mural paintings of the Padmanābhapuram palace.[1]

The inner walls of the seven-storeyed tower present a continuous array of paintings of scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Śucīndram Sthalapurāṇa, as also of a few miscellaneous themes based on Purāṇās. This artistic decoration of the walls, however, belongs to a recent date, namely, 1888 A.D., when the re-construction of the Gōpura was completed. The quality of the painting, in general, is second-rate.

1. Padmanābhapuram was the capital of the Vēnād kings until the time of Bālamārtāṇḍa Varma. The palace is a splendid treasure-house of art; the mural paintings in particular are excellent.

Since the scenes of the Sthalapurāṇa constitute the major part of the paintings, these may be considered first. The walls from the 3rd to the 7th storey are mainly devoted to the delineation of the events embodied in the 'Śucīndra Māhātmyam'.

(a) *Scenes from the Sthalapurāṇa :*

Panel 1. (Western wall — 3rd Storey): Atri's āśram is pictured in the midst of a natural scenery. Atri is found in the company of some ṛiṣis, all appearing serene and serious.

Panel 2 : A scene in the Brahmalōka. The divine creator Brahmā is seated in all his glory. A group of ṛiṣis approaches him and makes a humble request that a Yāga (sacrifice) be performed there.

Panel 3 : The conduct of the Yāga is depicted in all its vividity.

Panel 4 : Viṣṇu arrives on his Garuḍavāhana at Atri's āśram and invites Atri for the Yāga at Brahmalōka.

Panel 5 : On the eve of his departure, Atri is found absorbed in contemplation. Anasūya is receiving Pādōdaka as her source of protection during his absence.

Panel 6 : The Trimūrtis grace the Yāga by their holy presence; they are seated on their respective thrones, while the ṛiṣis at the feet of the Trimūrtis are seen offering prayers.

Panel 7 : The continuance of the elaborate Yāga by Atri and a host of other ṛiṣis.

Panel 8 : Atri's Āśram appears again. Anasūya is all hospitality to the pilgrims and wayfarers.

Panel 9 : The consequences of a severe drought, evidently the test of the Trimūrtis, are experienced. Plants, rivers and the earth are scorched by the heat. Anasūya invokes the aid of the Pādōdaka and a spell of rainfall occurs. How the drops of the Pādōdaka falling from her hand raise a mighty cloud bringing rain on its wake, is vividly portrayed.

Panel 10 : Anasūya serves food for three aged pilgrims. This scene merely represents the normal hospitality of Anasūya. But, appearing as it does at this juncture, it suggests the advent of the Trimūrtis in the guise of pilgrims. In reality, the succeeding scenes do not support such an identification. Hence, it seems an unfortunate blunder that this theme figures here.

Panel 1: (4th Storey): The 'Trilōka' or Heaven is vacant; the three thrones situated up above the hills, are empty.

Panel 2: Three old brahmins, bent with age, having hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, arrive at the āśram leaning on sticks. Anasūya extends a cordial welcome to the mendicants.

Panel 3: The guests are seated for food; they are indicated as saying something to Anasūya. (Obviously they make the strange request that while she serves food, she should be nude. As a device for getting out of the awkward situation, she seeks the aid of Atri's Pādōdakam). The same panel depicts Anasūya sprinkling Pādōdakam on the three men. Anasūya's face shows dismay.

Panel 4: The three (gods who are transformed into) babies are lying on a cot, and Anasūya is standing by their side.

Panel 5: Anasūya, in her nude form, is feeding the three babies on her breast-milk, thus literally fulfilling the request of her guests. The painter has inappropriately depicted Anasūya with a plethora of ornaments; it suits ill with the humble wife of a sage.

Panel 6: Anasūya is rocking the three cradles of the babies. Her face is expressive of delight, a feature which has been delineated with care.

Panel 7: Nārada arrives at the āśram and learns from Anasūya all about the occurrence. The same panel shows Nārada's interview with the three goddesses, obviously informing them of the strange turn of events and suggesting to them the manner of regaining their lords.[2]

Panel 8: The goddesses are shown wandering in search of their missing husbands. They enquire of ṛiṣis on the way, but in vain.

Panel 9: Eventually arriving at Anasūya's cottage, they are seen talking with her.

Panel 10: The Dēvīs look into the cradles and see the great Dēvas in their new form.

Panel 11: Anasūya indicates to them that the restoration of the Dēvas to their old selves could be effected only after the return of Atri and points to them the 'Prajñā tīrtha' for performing penance.

2. It would have been better to choose different panels to present these two scenes since the events take place in two different regions.

Panel 1 : (5th Storey): The goddesses are absorbed in penance, each in front of a tīṛtha or holy spring. The landscape, full of trees and ponds, is attractively pictured.

Panel 2 : Nārada, appearing before the Dēvīs, intimates them of the existence of a shrine of Kālı at a slight distance to the north (Nārada actually points to that place with his first finger) and suggests to them that they might pay their homage to her. The same panel also presents the figure of the Kāli goddess (Munnūṟṟunaṅkaı) in all her prowess and glory.

Panel 3 · Anasūya ıs seen enquirıng of a ṛisi, very likely Nārada, as to when the Yāga ın the Brahmalōka would end and Atri would return. The risi points hıs sūci (first) finger indicating that the Yāga wıll be over ın a single day.

Panel 4 : The concluding stage of the Yāga is depicted. Many more ṛiṣis and ceremonies than before, are shown. Particularly, the leading part played by Atri in conducting the Yāga is vividly portrayed.

Panel 5 : Atṛi returns to his āśram, when Anasūya receives him with the utmost respect. After Atri sees the three babies, he and his wife are engaged in conversation. (Evidently she narrates to him the circumstances which led to the presence of the babies).

Panel 6 : (At the bidding of Atri) Anasūya restores the three gods to their normal selves. A resplendent view of the Trimūrtis appears. Undoubtedly, the artist is at his best here.

Panel 7 : Atri and Anasūya offer their prayers to the Dēvas (and probably request them to be born again as their children and also to bless them with perpetual darśan).

Panel 8 : This panel shows the three sons (Candra, Dattātrēya and Durvāsa) as devout lads engaged in orthodx Śaivite observances, wearing holy ashes and beads (rudrākṣamālās). Several ṛiṣis are blessing the boys.

Panel 9 : The Trimūrtis, (obviously in compliance with the second request) appear on their respective Vāhanās. It is a magnificently conceived scene, although in the execution of details, the artist has left much to be desired. No doubt, the figures of the three gods are carefully drawn; but Garuḍa, the Vāhana of Viṣṇu, is clumsily presented, while the bull, the Vāhana of Śiva, is far from satisfactory in its appear-

ance. As the Dēvas descend from Heaven, Gandharvas, (attendants of Dēvas) are showering flowers on them. Atri and Anasūya are worshipping the Dēvas with hands held in anjali.

Panel 10: Then appears the dramatic emergence of the Aśvatha tree and the Trimūrti linga. At the very root of the sacred Aśvatha (which was obviously the first to appear) rises a flame. The central stem of the tree presents the faces of Brahmā, Visṇu and Śiva in the ascending order. Atri, Anasūya, their sons and a host of ṛiṣis are offering their devout obeisance. The feelings of bewilderment and ecstasy on the faces of the worshippers are well portrayed.

Panel 11: The liṅga alone appears. Obviously, it represents the Trimūrti liṅga embodying the three Dēvas; but here the liṅga does not show the faces of the three gods. Once again, Atri and his family, with their hands held up above their heads, worship the liṅga.

Panel 12: This panel shows a large multitude of ṛiṣis and devotees offering worship to the liṅga.

Panel 1: (6th Storey): Atri, Anasūya and their sons perform abhiṣēkha on the sacred liṅga.

Panel 2: With this panel commences the delineation of the story of Indra's purification figuring in the Sthalapurāṇa. The mighty Indra, though seated on his imposing throne, is crest-fallen. His entire body is covered with eyes.[3] The panel represents Indra conferring with his friends as to the steps to be adopted by him for securing complete redemption. Dēvadāsis, Dikpālas and other attendants are all pictured as adjuncts to Indra's court. One amusing feature is that the head-dress and bands across the shoulders worn by two pages who stand by the side of Indra, appear strikingly similar to those adopted by modern peons of the Travancore Government.[4]

Panel 3: Indra is proceeding on his magnificent chariot drawn by six horses. Airāvada, his famous vehicle, is bringing up the rear. The group is accompanied by soldiers, pipers and drummers. Evidently this depicts the journey to Śucīndram.

3. As observed earlier, the immediate result of Gautama's curse was that Indra's body was covered with feminine genital organs. It was only after Indra's fervent appeal and through the intervention of Bṛhaspati that the second transformation came about.

4. Surely, no insult to Indra is intended! However, the incongruous feature is a result of lack of imagination on the part of the painter.

Panel 4: Nandidēvar, the never-failing devotee of Śiva, arrests (at Tērūr) the further progress of Indra, since it would be sacrilegious for impure Indra to enter the holy place.

Panel 5: (On the suggestion of Nandi) Indra betakes himself to the hill, Gōrakṣapura, near Śucīndram. The hill and the charming landscape of the vicinity are vividly portrayed. Indra performs penance standing on one leg.

Panel 6: In order to have water, Airāvada gets up the hill and gores with his tusk a river (Dantanadi or Kōṭṭāṟ). The actual commencement of the spring is shown in its natural setting.

Panel 7: Bhūtappāṇḍy, through which the river flows, and the monkeys which abound in the place, are depicted.

Panel 8: The course of the river down to Śucīndram and beyond is shown. The villages on the banks are indicated, but in a perfunctory manner.

Panel 9: At the foot of the tree under which Indra performs his penance, there appears Śiva himself. (Evidently he advises him to proceed to Śucīndram and worship the deity of the place). The same panel depicts the march of Indra in procession, with his followers. Uccaisravas, Indra's horse, and Airāvada, his elephant, also accompany the group.

Panel 10: Indra performs an elaborate pūjā for the Śiva liṅga at Śucīndram.

Panel 1: (7th Storey): Indra's worship of the Śiva Liṅga continues. He is showering flowers on the liṅga, evidently accompanied by invocations.

Panel 2: Śiva and Pārvati appear on their vāhana, the bull. The latter is however, very inartistically represented. It looks too old and life-less; moreover, the head appears disproportionately small for its body. By the side of Śiva and Pārvati are standing Subrahmaṇia and Brahmā. It is inexplicable how these two appear at this stage. Perhaps, by mistake, the artist has substituted Subrahmaṇia for Viṣṇu.

Panels 3 and 4: The two succeeding panels picture the elaborate ceremony of Indra's purification held in front of the Aśvatha tree and the Trimūrti liṅga. Indra is shown inside the huge jar (of boiling ghee) as anjalihasta. An impressive scene this! All the Dēvas, the Dēvī Munnūṟṟunaṅkai, and a host of ṛisis are all found lining the arena. Numerous brahmins (obviously denoting the 300 members of the

Sabha) also appear. Emerging from the jar, Indra is seen handing over the seal (the mudra) to a brahmin.

Panels 5 and 6 : The two panels which follow, depict the celebration of Indra's deliverance. Multitudes of people are witnessing the sacred spot where Indra is redeemed. Indra stands as his normal handsome self. Eventually Śiva, accompanied by the other two Mūrtis, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, appear on the scene and bless the redeemed Indra.

Panel 7 : The very last panel presents Śiva in the form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, propounding Yōga and Jñāna to a large gathering of ṛiṣis and students, sitting at his feet wrapped in attention.

(b) *Scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa:* The walls of the first two storeys are painted with scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa. Begun in the 2nd storey, the illustration is completed in the 1st! Why this arrangement has been adopted and why the Sthalapurāṇa story is painted from the 3rd to the 7th storey is rather difficult to explain. One plausible explanation is this. The 1st two storeys have less of natural light than the rest, and perhaps it was thought better to begin the Sthalapurāṇa illustration from the 3rd. Regarding the Rāmāyaṇa painting, probably the artists were not quite sure how much of it could be accomodated, and so, commenced it from the 2nd, and continued it in the 1st.

Panel 1: (2nd Storey): Daśaratha, the lord of Ayōdhya, is conferring with Vasiṣṭha, his family preceptor, and Sumantra, his minister, presumably on the question of the religious ceremonies to be undertaken for being blessed with children.

Panel 2 : On their suggestion, the sacrifice called the 'Putrakāmēṣṭi Yāga' is performed by Vasiṣṭha assisted by Ṛṣisṛiṅga. In the midst of the sacrifice, there emerges from the hōma kuṇḍa a goddess with a pail of pudding (pāyasam).

Panel 3 : Daśaratha gives the pāyasam to his three wives,[5] and the long-wished-for children are born.

Panel 4 : The Queens feed and fondle their babies.

5. This is a piece of inaccuracy, for both in Vālmiki's and Kamban's version of the Rāmāyana, it is stated that Daśaratha distributed the pudding only among Kausalya and Kaikēyi in the first instance, and that subsequently each gave a portion of her share to Sumitṛa. Hence, the latter got more than the other two and the consequent birth of two sons for her.

Panel 5: Viśvāmitṛa appears and eventually secures the permission of Daśaratha for taking Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to the forest in order to fight Tāḍaka.

Panel 6: This pictures vividly the Tāḍaka Vadham or Rāma slaying Tāḍaka.

Panel 7: Viśvāmitṛa now performs the sacrifice.

Panel 8: Rāma attacks and kills the demons, Kara Dhūṣanas and Tṛisiras.

Panel 9: On their way the touch of Rāma's foot restores the accursed Ahalya to her old self. The same panel shows Gautama and Ahalya in happy company.

Panel 10: Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, along with the sage Visvāmitṛa, arrive at Janaka's court. Rāma strings the celebrated bow of Janaka, and in the course of his attempt the bow snaps.

Panel 11: The despatch of invitations to various kings is rather too elaborately shown. However, it is fantastic to see that, among the invited, two appear wearing crowns similar to those of the Travancore rulers!

Panel 12: Sīta decks herself with ornaments and gets prepared for the wedding.

Panel 13: 'Vaikuṇṭha' is pictured. A grand scene this! Viṣṇu, Indra and other gods seated in Vaikuṇṭha evince their joy at the marriage of Rāma and Sīta.

Panel 1: (1st Storey) — (top of the eastern wall): It delineates 'Sīta Kalyāṇam' in all its glory and magnificence.

Panel 2: On the way back to Ayōdhya, Rāma's party encounters Paraśurāma and vanquishes him.

Panel 3: In the midst of rejoicings, Nārada reminds Rāma of his life's mission.

Panel 4: Daśaratha consults Vasiṣṭha, Sumantra and others, obviously concerning the celebration of Rāma's coronation.

Panel 5: Kuni, the veritable mischief-maker, appears on the scene and persuades Kaikēyi to act. Kaikēyi's demand of the two boons of Daśaratha is also shown in the panel. But the agony which seized Daśaratha, the court scene, etc., have been omitted, obviously for want of space.

Panel 6 : Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sīta are distributing charity among the poor. Probably this has no connection with their life in the forest; apparently, it indicates how they were leading a noble life when fate called them away to the forest.

Panel 7 : The starting of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sīta to the forest is shown; but the wailings of the queens and the people have not been depicted.

Panel 8 : The party crosses the river Ganges in the boat of Guha.

Panel 9 : They meet some ṛiṣis in Citṛa Kūḍa.

Panel 10 : The 'Pādukāpaṭṭābhiṣēkha' by Bharata appears.[6]

Panel 11 : Rāma encounters Kabandha, the giant, and vanquishes him. Kabandha's figure is pictured in a realistic manner.

Panel 12 : Lakṣmaṇa's mutilation of Śūrpanakha's nose.

Panel 13 : Rāma pursues the gold deer, Mārīca, and kills him.

Panel 14 : The brothers (in quest of Sīta) meet wounded Jaṭāyu.[7]

Panel 15 : Rāma encounters Śūrpanakha's son and makes short work of him.

Panel 16 : 'Sugrīva Sakhya' — the compact between Rāma and Sugrīva for mutual help. Hanumān stands near the two; it suggests the leading part played by him in concluding the compact.

Panel 17 : The duel between Bāli and Sugrīva. Rāma's arrow from behind the tree flies against Bāli.

Panel 18 : Hanumān is bringing the Cūḍāmaṇi or signet ring from Śīta and presenting it to Rāma.[8]

Panel 19 : Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender.

Panel 20 : The slaying of Indrajit.

Panel 21 : The fall of mighty Rāvaṇa, valiantly fighting, is vividly portrayed.

6. Bharata, unable to persuade Rāma to come back, rules on behalf of Rāma This is symbolized by Rāma's foot-wear being placed on the throne. But earlier, Bharata's journey to the forest, his futile attempt to recall Rāma and Bharata's consequent agony are all omitted.

7. The actual carrying away of Sīta by Rāvana does not find a place in the mural painting

8. A considerable part of the intervening portion of the story is omitted. Hanumān's exploits in Lanka do not find a place.

Panel 22: The coronation of Rāma is the theme of the closing scene. The vast crowds of rulers, officers and common people as well as the numerous troops, musicians and pipers are all painted with care.

(c) *Painting of miscellaneous Purāṇic themes:*

While the Sthalapurāṇa account is delineated on the main panels of the walls, commencing with the 3rd and ending with the 7th storey, the narrow panels on either side of the doorways — eastern and western — are devoted to paintings of either miscellaneous Purāṇic themes or merely of representations of gods and goddesses.

The 3rd storey shows Umāmahēśvara accompanied by Gaṇapati, Subrahmaṇia, Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda. Besides, the celebrated Periyapurāṇa story of Śiruttoṇda Nāyanār is delineated. The 4th storey shows in the corresponding portion the ten Avatārs of Viṣṇu, as also the tale of 'Santānagōpāla'. The 5th storey depicts the Maṭādhipatis, obviously those connected with the temple. The 6th storey portrays certain queens of Travancore on the western wall. They represent Umayammai Rāni, Laksmi Bāi, and Pārvati Bāi. The corresponding portion of the eastern wall shows Travancore kings — Kārtikai Tirunāḷ, Mārtānda Varma, Svāti Tirunāḷ and Āyillyam Tirunāḷ. The 7th storey presents the goddesses Lakṣmi on the eastern panel and Sarasvati on the western one.

Estimate of the Painting: The general quality of the painting is of an inferior order. The artistic excellence, naturalness, vivacity and grace noticed on the frescoes of the Bṛhadīśvara temple or the mural paintings of the Padmanābhapuram palace are not achieved here. Excessive and occasionally tasteless colouring adopted at places mars the beauty of the paintings in a large measure. Moreover, fundamental rules of geometrical drawing are ignored in certain cases. For example, in panel 10 of the 3rd storey, the leaves spread before the guests appear to be hanging almost vertically. Anachronisms regarding costumes and jewels, as well as stiff and conventional poses of figures are other defects. However, on the whole, it is undeniable that patient and elaborate labour have been bestowed on the painting, and at places, the delineation of themes is praiseworthy.

Section 2 — Cars:

Wood-carving of high quality is displayed by the cars of the temple. The Śucīndram pagoda has at present four cars, the Svāmy Tēr,

the Amman Tēr, the Piḷḷayār Tēr and the Indran Tēr, each called after the particular deity carried in procession during the car-festivals. The cars are all carved of iluppai (Bassia sapotaceae), a variety of wood eminently suited for the purpose. The cars of the Śucīndram temple are not different in their structure and ornamental details from those found in the rest of Tamiḻ Nāḍ.

Svāmy Tēr : The Svāmy Tēr, the biggest of the cars in Śucīndram, about 60 feet high, is believed to have served as the Amman Tēr prior to 1740 A.D.[9] The Svāmy Tēr, like all cars in South Indian temples, appears to have been constructed more or less on the model of a vimāna. But, whereas a vimāna tends to narrow down only at the upper half, the car has a narrow base as well.

The car is formed of five layers or tiers. The two layers on the base gradually rise in width until the third one is the widest. The third tier is of considerable height, and it maintains the same width throughout. The 4th and 5th layers present a gradually decreasing width, shaped like a truncated cone. The point of the cone is finished off by a stūpi. The five layers from bottom upwards are called 'Ubapīṭam', 'Aḍistānam', 'Nāḍakam', 'Dēvāsanam' and 'Siṁhāsanam'. The 'Siṁhāsanam' is a small square pavilion within which the god is placed during the procession.

About the centre of the first face of the car, just a little lower than the middle layer (Nāḍakam), two demon-like Dvārapālakas are represented. Their fierce look, protruding teeth and round eyes, together with the imposing clubs borne in the hand, suggest their role as the guardians of the cars. Above them and in the centre of the 'Nāḍakam', a pair of wooden horses is carved in the sprightly galloping pose. The figure represented as holding their reins is Brahmā.

All the five layers of the car bear on their faces ornamentally carved panels, interspersed by turret-like pavilions. The panels present various deities and Purāṇic themes, all carved in high relief. But, the sequence of the scenes or themes has not been designed methodically. In fact, they do not seem to depict a continuous story. Naṭarāja, the lord of dance, Śiva and Pārvati on the bull, Rāvaṇanugrahamūrti, Dēvī seated in Sukhāsana, Gaṇapati on Mūsika, Subrahmaṇia on Mayūra, Kṛṣṇa as Vēṇugōpāla, the various avatārs of Viṣṇu, Manmatha and Rati and a

9. See Ante Chapter II, p. 52.

host of other gods and goddesses are all skilfully carved in wood. Erotic figures depicting embrace or kiss or even obscene poses appear on a large number of panels.[10]

Immediately below the pavilions and the panels, a continuous array of figures of warriors is shown. Some are on foot, while others are on horse-back. Some warriors carry swords and shields, others bows and arrows. The rampant Yāḷi appears as a decorative motif at regular intervals.

Above the Nāḍakam, as many as 84 shafts or pillars are planted on the eve of the car-festival. They are all covered by decorative cloth. Festoons and flags also adorn the outer sides of the car.

The Amman and Pillayār Tēr : The Amman Tēr, about 40 feet high, is about two thirds of the size of Svāmy Tēr, while the Piḷḷayār Tēr, 28 feet high, is a little less than half of it. But both of them also consist of five layers and their internal ornamentation is similar to that in the Svāmy Tēr. The same type of panels, carved in high relief, as well as the pavilions, and the erotic figures are found.

The Indran Tēr : This is the smallest one in size, and it consists of a single layer. A number of shafts erected on it and finished off by a conical canopy constitute the Indran Tēr, which on account of its simple formation is called the Capra Tēr. It is hardly 14 feet in height.

The exact date when each one of the cars was built, cannot be easily determined. Local tradition estimates the present Svāmy Tēr to be over 500 years old. That the Amman Tēr was constructed soon after 1740 A.D. when Candā Sāhib burnt down the old Svāmy Tēr, is the widely accepted view, and there does not seem to be any reason to disbelieve it. But the present Svāmy Tēr and Piḷḷayār Tēr do not seem as old as the 15th century, as tradition avers. True, the Utsavas had started by that time, but it does not follow that these particular cars should have been constructed then.

It is known that only so late as the 17th century that the broad streets of Śucīndram were constructed. Tirumala Nāyak is credited with this change. Is it probable that he himself was the architect of the cars ? In narrower streets such huge cars could not have been drawn. Hence these cars were built in all probability only in the time

0. See Ante Chapter XI, pp. 341-2.

of Tirumala Nāyak or later. From the temple records it is learnt that the Indran Tēr was constructed so late as 1864 A.D.

Section 3 — Vāhanas ·

The temple has a fairly large equipment of vāhanas or vehicles for use in connection with the festivals. But few of them belong to an early date. Obviously, the vāhanas of wood are not very old, and they constitute the most numerous of the group.

The prominent among the vāhanas made of wood are the following: —

1. Four Ṛṣabha Vāhanas.
2. Two peacocks.
3. One Hamsa (Annam).
4. One Parrot.
5. One Tiger.
6. Two Horses in the galloping position.
7. One Elephant.
8. A deer and tiger standing on the same frame.
9. One hillock under a tortoise.
10. Two Mūṣika Vāhanas.
11. Several caprams or raised platforms with posts erected on all sides.
12. 16 Palanquins.
13. Garuḍa Vāhana — which presents Garuḍa with his left knee planted below firmly and the right leg bent at the knee and resting in front. His two arms are stretched out in front. Garuḍa's position here, is similar to that found in the sculpture of Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa.

Silver Vāhanas :—(1) Two Ṛsabha Vāhanas exist, one small and another big. The bigger one is 4′ 6″ in height, while the other is only 2′ 5″. The big Ṛṣabha Vāhana is a splendid piece of art. The Ṛṣabha's elegant standing pose and its well-carved features, particularly the brawny muscles and legs, are beautifully portrayed.

(2) *Kailāsa Parvata* :—But, unquestionably the most admirable one is the huge Kailāsa Vāhana which represents Rāvaṇa lifting the sacred hill, the abode of Śiva. The hill has been depicted skilfully. Still more impressive is the marvellously successful delineation of Rāvaṇa

engaged in raising the hill. The features of Rāvaṇa, his ten heads, twenty hands stretched out, his thickset legs planted below firmly and his entire frame exerting to the utmost in raising the hill, are all exquisitely sculptured. This silver Kailāsa Vāhana is reputed to be the best in the whole of South India.

(3) *Garuḍa Vāhana* :—Two silver Garuḍa Vāhanas, the bigger one 3 feet and the other about 2 feet in height, form the vehicles of Viṣṇu. Both carved in the characteristic kneeling pose with wings spread out and hands clasped in anjali are carefully equipped Vāhanas.

(4) *Guṇḍōdhara Vāhana*.—This Vāhana, three feet in height, presents the short-statured Guṇḍōdhara in his characteristic form with the protruding belly.

(5) *Anna Vāhana* :—This Vāhana is shaped in the form of a hamsa or swan. Its wings, kept spread at its back, and its sprightly gait are depicted well. This vehicle is employed to carry the Dēvī.

There are only two Vāhanas made of bronze — one of the Periccāḻi or the Mouse in the standing form and the other of the horse in the galloping pose.

Most of the present Vāhanas made of metal are of recent date. The records of the temple show that the two Ṛṣabha Vāhanas, the Anna, Garuḍa and Gundōdhara Vāhanas were made in 1905 A.D. Members of the family of Śāttayyan Āśāri, the hereditary śilpi of the temple, are known to have sculptured them. The Kailāsa Vāhana was constructed about 1874 A.D. The sculpture was actually executed at Padmanābhapuram by Śilpis brought from Trivandrum and Āṛanmuḷa for the purpose. After the sculpture was completed, it was safely carried to Śucīndram. The date of the bronze vāhanas is not ascertainable; apparently they are old, judged by their appearance.

Section 4 : Sāḷagrāmas

Among the equipments of the Śucīndram temple there is a group of Sāḷagrāmas carefully preserved in Tekkēḍam. A Sālagrāma is 'a flintified ammonite shell, which is river-worn, and thus rounded and beautifully polished.'[11] The Sāḷagrāma stones are generally gathered from the bed of Gaṇḍaki, a tributary of the Ganges or are shaped out

11 T. A. Gopinatha Rao: Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, part I, Introduction, p. 94.

of a particular kind of stone procurable at Dvāraka. It is believed that the Sāḷagrāma possesses certain mystic and sacred virtues. Each Sāḷagrāma has a hole through which are visible several spiral grooves resembling Viṣṇu's Cakra. Hence the Sāḷagrāma is looked upon as a representative of Viṣṇu. The particular form of Cakra found on each Sāḷagrāma is said to denote a different aspect of Viṣṇu. As many as 89 varieties of Śāḷagrāmas are distinguished, each representing a different name of Viṣṇu. The collection at Śucīndram consists of a small group of eight Sāḷagrāmas, as well as a charming image of Rāma in the standing pose carved out of Sāḷagrāma stone. It is likely that they were brought to the temple as early as the construction of Tekkēḍam itself.

Section 5: Jewels (Plates 34, 35 and 36)[12]

The Śucīndram pagoda is rich in its equipment of jewels and ornaments. Most of them are employed on occasions of ceremonies and festivals. The undermentioned jewels are the most valuable ones.

(1) *Muḷukkāppaṅgi* :—The central one on the second row of Plate No. 34 is the bright and dazzling ornament called "Muḷukkāppaṅgi". It is the golden mask decked on the Sthāṇu linga when it is completely coated with sandal paste. The eyelids, the nose, the prabha or kalai decorating the forehead, as also the central band and pendants carved on the jewel, are clearly seen. The pendants in the centre are all adorned with precious stones. One of the costliest jewels in the temple, it is estimated to be worth Rs. 40,000/-.

(2) *Turāyi* :—At the extreme end of the 2nd row in the Plate are found two jewels employed for adorning the head-gear. The one at the left extremity is set with two rows of diamonds, while the other is decked with red rubies. At the centre of each of the jewels is fixed a green emerald of a superb quality. Local tradition has it that both the Turāyis of the Śucīndram pagoda were gifts presented to the temple by the two kings, Āditya Varma and Rāma Varma (15th century), who were associated with the construction of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa. Each one of the Turāyis is estimated at Rs. 10,000/-.[13]

12. Through the kind courtesy of the Director of Archaeology (Travancore) I am able to reproduce the illustrations (Plates Nos. 34-36) showing the jewels of the temple. The jewels described in the text are all illustrated in Plate No. 34.

13 Information regarding the jewels and their estimated costs have been largely gathered from the Vattappalli Sthānikar and the 'Tiruābharana' Special Officer of the State.

(3) *Valiya Padakkam*.—This is the long pendant seen about the middle of the last row in the U shaped fashion. This magnificent jewel really consists of 25 pieces of richly carved chains, all fastened together by golden wires. At the centre of each piece is set a diamond of high quality, while at the pivot of the entire jewel are found Navaratnas. The pendant as a whole presents intricate and skilled workmanship.

(4) *Cerịya Padakkam* :—The jewel (shown to the proper right of the previous one and presenting the 'U' shape) is almost a replica of the 'Valiya Padakkam'; only it is a little smaller in size. Here, too, 25 pieces of richly-carved gold links are found fastened together by gold wires. But the workmanship displayed by this pendant is definitely of a higher order. More closely knit, it presents a more compact and attractive appearance. At the centre of each chain red stones are fixed. A small pendant at the centre of the jewel bears in its middle a dazzling emerald adorned all around by embellishments of gold.

The Valiya Padakkam is estimated at Rs. 60,000 and the smaller one at Rs. 40,000. It is, however, difficult to determine the date of these two jewels. The records of 1813 A.D. speak of a huge pendant, and we hear of another one only since 1867 A.D. Perhaps, the Valiya Padakkam is an old jewel; and it is learnt from the records that Śrī Ayillyam Tirunāl Mahārāja (1860-80 A.D.) had the smaller one made.

(5) *Śarappaḷḷi Māla*.—This is a cluster of 12 long gold chains fastened together by a small pendant at the centre. The chains do not, however, display any marked workmanship of skill. This group is said to be a collection of chains presented to the temple by the Mahārājas of Travancore. Owing to wear and tear, parts of the chains had frequently to be repaired. The weight of the Śarappaḷḷi Māla is stated to be equivalent to 360 sovereigns.

(6) '*Padakka Māla*':—The three weighty ornaments (kept suspended on the 2nd row — one to the right and two to the left of the 'Muḻukkāppaṅgi') are chains of richly embellished pendants. Each pendant displays workmanship of bewildering intricacy. Of these three, the one seen to the right of the Muḻukkāppaṅgi is the most superb. This particular jewel is stated to have been presented by Kārtikai Tirunāḷ (1758-98 A.D.). The other two are decidedly older, and probably they have been in existence in the temple for a long time now.

(7) '*Candrakkalamāla*' *(3rd Row)*:—Richly-carved ornaments in the shape of the disc of the moon are joined together by gold chains.

At the centre of each one of the discs three emeralds are fixed. Elaborate carving is displayed by the jewel. Each of these ornaments is estimated roughly at Rs. 16,000. No information is available regarding the date of these jewels.

(8) *Gaṅgādēvi* :—In between the two Candrakkala Mālās is shown an exquisitely carved golden figure of Gaṅgādēvī. The portion of the body below the abdomen is depicted in the shape of a serpent's tail. Gaṅgādēvī's face is very elegantly sculptured. This is believed to have been presented to the temple by Gauri Laksmi Bāi (1811-15 A.D.).

(9) *Valampiri Śaṅkha* .—Shown at the foot of the 'Mulukkāppaṅgi' is a rare type of conch. Its curvature is found on the right instead of the left side, as is usually the case.[14] The conch is 9 inches in length, and it has been adorned by several precious stones set on them. This Śaṅkha appears to have formed a part of the temple's equipments from an early time.

(10) *Cakṛappadakkam* :—Below the Padakkamāla (shown to the right of Mulukkāppaṅgi) is placed on the pedestal, a well-carved pendant. Measuring 1′ 2″ in diameter, it is a pendant of big size. It is surprising to learn that about 700 diamonds and rubies are fixed on the face of the pendant. Dazzling in appearance, it forms an attractive ornament on Sthāṇumūrti during the Utsavas. Estimated to cost over Rs. 20,000, this is believed to have been endowed to the temple by Bālamārtāṇḍavarma (1729-58 A.D.).

(11) *Kirīṭa* :—An elaborately carved Karaṇḍamakuṭa of gold, with precious stones set at its middle, is seen on the first row. It is not in active use now. It is believed to be one of the oldest ornaments in the temple. Neither the donor of the gift nor the exact time of its endowment is known.

Besides the above-mentioned jewels, there are many chains, rings, and silver aṅgis. Every year, on the day of the car-festival of the Mārkaḻi Utsava, the Mahārāja of Travancore makes a gift of one Candrakkala of gold and a Sarappaḷḷimāla of four chains as well as a silk cloth to the temple of Śucīndram. The Sarappaḷḷimāla and the Candrakkala are each of the weight of Rs. 10. It is possible to ascertain approximately the date when this practice was introduced. At present, there

14. However, it may be observed that some of the famous temples possess conch of this variety In the whole of Travancore, there exist about 12 Śaṅkhas of this pattern.

exist 151 Candrakkala and 81 Sarappaḷḷimāla of the prescribed pattern. Therefore it would seem that about 150 years ago, that is, about 1795 A.D., the practice of bestowing these gifts was begun. Very probably, Rāma Varma Kārtikai Tirunāḷ instituted it for the first time. Local tradition avers that originally it was a pendant with precious stones set on it, that was presented along with the Candrakkala. But it was discovered in the time of Svāti Tirunāḷ (1829-47) that the smiths, in collusion with some of the authorities of the temple, used to substitute inferior stones for the better ones before the ornaments reached Śucīndram. Hence the Sarappaḷḷimāla was ordered to be substituted in place of the pendant.

CHAPTER XV

INSCRIPTIONS

Inscriptions constitute the most fruitful source of early South Indian History, and Śucīndram is rich in her epigraphic material. No other place in Travancore, possesses such a large number of inscriptions; even Kanyākumari, though more famous in other respects, ranks only second to Śucīndram in the matter of its epigraphic wealth.

In the precincts of the Sthāṇunāthasvāmy temple, in the Dvārakai Emperumān, Pērambalam, Kṛṣṇasvāmy, Kulaśēkhara Piḷḷayār and Munnūṟṟunaṅkai shrines, all told, there exist well over a hundred lithic records in Śucīndram. Copper plates in the possession of private individuals and inscriptions on images and vessels constitute another epigraphic element.

The Sthānunāthasvāmy temple itself presents over 70 stone inscriptions. They appear at different parts of the pagoda; but, by far the largest number of inscriptions is engraved on the natural rock at the base of the Kailāsanātha shrine. A compound wall recently erected around the outskirts of the shrine has encircled a portion of the rock, with the result that a part of it is within the precincts of the shrine, while another is outside it abutting on the Śrībalipura on the south and the Kaṅkāḷanāthar Kōil on the east. Most of the inscriptions on this rock are in Vaṭṭeḻuttu script and belong to the earliest period in the history of the temple. Then, there are the inscriptions engraved on the walls of the halls and porticos of the pagoda. The façades of the first prākāra, the Udayamārtāṇḍa Maṇḍapa, the Vīra Pāṇḍyan Maṇi

Maṇḍapa and of the entrance porch of the Gōpura present a considerable number of epigraphs. Pillars and stone slabs in the various parts of the temple also record some others.

In the Dvārakai Emperumān temple, inscriptions are found on the façades of the Garbhagṛha and the Ardhamaṇḍapa as also on a boulder at the south-western corner of the Prākāra. Other shrines, like the 'Pērambalam' and the 'Kṛṣṇasvāmy Kōil', have inscriptions, which, however, are but a few in number, engraved either on the lintels of the entrance or on the façades of the Maṇḍapas.

Epigraphy has made a remarkable progress in Travancore during the last fifty years. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, K. V. Subrahmania Aiyar and A. S. Ramanatha Aiyar have brought out scholarly editions of many of the Śucīndram inscriptions, while several later epigraphs have been recently published by Mr. R. V. Poduval, the Director of Archaeology. But, even now, some inscriptions are available only in the shape of brief summaries of contents in the Annual Reports.

An important feature of the Śucīndram inscriptions is the wide variety of the royal dynasties which figure in them. There are epigraphs of the Early Pāṇḍyas, the Cōlas, the Cōḷa-Pāṇḍya Viceroys, the later Pāṇḍyas, the Vēṇāḍ kings and the modern Travancore monarchs, the Vijayanagar generals and the Nāyaks of Madura But the number belonging to each of these dynasties varies; inscriptions of the Vēṇāḍ kings form the most numerous, while, only one record of the Nāyak period has been so far discovered.

Śucīndram became the spiritual resort of many a king in early times. The invaders, rushing into the fertile plains of Nāñcināḍ, invariably proceeded to the famous temples of Sthāṇunāthasvāmy at Śucīndram and of Bhagavati at Kanyākumari. Religion, or at any rate religious observances and endowments, were held in great importance in early and medieval times. It was a common practice with people passing by the neighbourhood of these celebrated places to pay their homage to and bestow gifts on them. Most of these inscriptions register endowments made to the deities by kings and private individuals, while some record the constructions of particular shrines and edifices.

Epigraphy—a valuable aid to chronology : One feature, fortunate for the student of history, is that most of these inscriptions record the regnal years of the particular monarchs, in whose reigns they were engraved. These data yield valuable information about the sovereigns

who ruled at particular periods, and the dates gathered from them help us in fixing the chronology of certain monarchs and, in some cases, of particular events of their reigns.

Thus chronology, the bed-rock of history, derives its leading light from the lithic records. True, the chronological data regarding several inscriptions are not definite. However, in the case of such documents of uncertain date, approximate assessments are possible through such aids as the language, the palaeography and other internal pieces of evidence furnished by the inscriptions. It must, no doubt, be urged that chronological deductions drawn from these indirect sources are not always quite conclusive, and hence, they must be accepted with caution.

In spite of its imperfections, epigraphy forms the chronological guide to the Muse of History. Historians of the Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa Empires have had to acknowledge how, in the matter of fixing the dates of accession of kings or of principal events of their reigns, the Śucīndram inscriptions lend a helping hand.[1] Concerning the early Vēṇāḍ kings, it is no exaggeration to hold that even the limited reconstruction of their history now attempted, would be impossible, but for the Śucīndram inscriptions.[2]

Naturally, the different categories of the Śucīndram inscriptions present variation in the Eras used to denote dates. Inscriptions bear the Śaka Era, the Kali Era and the Malabār or Kollam Era. Also chronograms like *'Viśati'* and *'Kōlamba'* figure in a few cases. By far the most numerous epigraphs are dated in the Kollam Era. Though the origins of the Kali, Śaka and Kollam Eras have not yet been satisfactorily elucidated, the actual dates they yield are no longer in doubt. The two different dates of the commencement of the Kollam Era in vogue in North and South Malabar do not baffle us here, because all the records dated in the Kollam Era are of the Vēṇāḍ and later Travancore Kings, and hence they are reckoned on the basis of the commencement of the Era on the 1st of Ciṅgam or Āvaṇi (15th August 825 A.D.).

1. See, for example, Inscriptions of "Cōḻan talai koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya, of the Cōḷa Pāndyas and of Parākrama Pāṇḍya.

2. What the late Prof. Sundaram Pillay, the pioneer epigraphist of Travancore, wrote years ago, seems applicable to the Śucīndram epigraphs. He says· "The inscriptions offer the only reliable basis for the ancient history of Travancore and are sure to render substantial service in placing beyond doubt certain leading facts connected with the fluctuating fortunes of the Pāṇḍyan Kingdom and the Cōla Empire, not to speak of the steady light they throw on Dravidian philology and ancient history" See Nagamiah. State Manual, Vol. I, p. 195.

The definite astronomical details, that is, the Pañcāṅga date, indicating the month, day, natal star etc., are furnished by most of the inscriptions. But it is not always easy to secure conclusive results out of them; this is true of the Śucīndram records, as indeed of South Indian inscriptions in general. Particularly in the matter of determining dates of the Early Pāṇḍyan epigraphs, the astronomical data have not been of great help, because, a natal star with the corresponding details, may repeat itself thrice in a century. Hence, it is difficult to fix infallibly the corresponding date in the Christian Era. However, where two kings of the same name are mentioned in different inscriptions, the natal star is a factor of great value in distinguishing them. For example, this forms the only source for fixing the identity of Parākrama Pāṇḍya.[3]

An intriguing feature adopted in the dating of the Pāṇḍya inscriptions, and to a lesser extent of early Vēṇāḍ records, is the manner of indicating regnal years in terms of double dates as, for example, "*Irāṇḍāvatin Yetir Mūnṟāvatāṇḍu*" Scholars have made great efforts to explain the riddle as to what the two figures exactly specify. Does the 1st figure refer to the regnal year of the ruling prince and the second the number of years counted from the coronation of the previous ruler, as suggested by T. A. Gopinatha Rao?[4] Or does the 1st figure denote the time of the ruler's appointment as heir-apparent, while the second one specifies the actual year of the reign of the king? But all these speculations are shattered by the fact that inscriptions of one and the same reign furnish different figures on both the sides of the phrase 'yetir'.

It must be confessed, that it has not been possible to elucidate this mode of expressing the date. It has, however, been the practice to add up the two figures, the sum being taken as representing the regnal year. The correctness of this procedure is proved by the Śinnamanūr Plates, where the regnal year given in the Tamil̲ part as '*iraṇḍāvatin yetir patinān̲kāvatu*' is rendered in the corresponding samskṛit portion of the Plate as '*Śōdaśe Rājya verṣē*' (sixteenth year). Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the word 'yetir' occurring in these inscriptions has been so far translated by epigraphists as 'opposite'. This seems

3 See Antē Chapter II, pp. 36-7.

4. "Śen Tamil̲", Vol. IV, p 114.

5. See Indian Antiquary, Vol. XX, pp 288-289 and K. A. N. Sastri: "The Pāndyan Kingdom," pp. 7-9, foot note.

unacceptable; it makes no sense. Really, it ought to mean 'in addition to or subsequent to'.

Epigraphy—a source for Political and Social History. Apart from yielding the chronological data, the inscriptions of Śucīndram throw much welcome light on the political events connected with the reigns of certain monarchs. Victories or benefactions, establishment of charitable institutions, grant of tax-free lands or assignment of taxes are all details of incalculable value to the student of political history. The line of succession, particularly of the Vēnāḍ kings, and the enhancement or diminution of their political power can be gleaned from these epigraphs, and it has to be remembered that for some of these details, the inscriptions constitute the only source of information.

Generally, the form of grants recorded in inscriptions adopted a traditional pattern. Inscriptions, particularly of the donatory type, furnish the following details, (1) the name and ancestry of the donor as also the name of the ruling king. In the case of royal grants, the donor's genealogy and sometimes the glories of the dynasty also figured; (2) the date and the time when the gift was bestowed; (3) the institution to which the gift was made, its name, location, status, etc., (4) the description of the nature of the grant, including its boundaries, and its conditions; (5) the imprecations on violations of the grant, and (6) the name of the person who drew up the document and the names of witnesses. These details were furnished in accordance with the principles laid down in early Hindu law books to be adopted in documents conveying the right to property.[6]

Commemorative or declaratory inscriptions provided almost all the above-mentioned data except those regarding boundaries of lands or witnesses. They record the construction of particular edifices, or services rendered or promulgation of arrangements instituted. How all these classes of inscriptions supply useful data for the political, social and economic history of the place is obvious. The history of the temple, in particular, can never be re-constructed without the basic data furnished by the inscriptions.

Value of epigraphs for the study of the Fine Arts: An important piece of service which the epigraphs render is to enable us to trace chronologically the evolution of architectural and sculptural forms. The inscriptions furnish in many cases the dates of particular edifices. The

6. Burnell. 'South Indian Palaeography', pp. 95 ff.

style of architecture adopted by them at the specified period can be known. The features of the sculpture of particular eras too, can be similarly ascertained. Inscriptions, recording the establishment of images, moreover, enable us to determine the iconographic patterns. In short, the history of the fine arts in Śucīndram, as in the rest of South India, has to be based primarily upon the data supplied by the inscriptions, though they are not always as copious and complete as one may wish.

Admixture of Malayāḷam and Tamiḻ words: A unique importance of the inscriptions of South Travancore in general, and of those of Śucīndram in particular, is the light they throw on the admixture of Malayāḷam words and sentences with the Tamil language of the place. No doubt, the language and the script of the early inscriptions of Śucīndram are exactly similar to those in the epigraphs of the contemporary Pāṇḍyas. But, beginning from the 12th century A.D. and more decidedly from the 13th century, by which time, the Malayāḷi brahmins had established their supremacy in the pagoda, there occurs a marked change in the phraseology of the inscriptions. A few Malayāḷam words are found creeping into the body of Tamiḻ inscriptions. No doubt, the structure of the sentence, as also the entire vocabulary, continue to be set in Tamiḻ. But the appearance of changed inflections in certain verbs and the substitution of the nasalised form for some hard consonants which features are marked in the Malayāḷam language are perceptibly on the increase in the case of the later inscriptions.

The epigraph of 384 M.E. (1209 A.D.) presents the new element in an unmistakable manner. Some Malayāḷam forms like *'Ī grāmattil'*, *mumbu*, *itinnu*, *taḷippiccum*, and *Viḷakkiṉu*, are found to appear. The inscription of 398 M.E. (1223 A.D.) has only one word *'Karpiccatiṉu'* attributable to the influence of Malayāḷam. On the other hand, the famous inscription of 404 M.E. Kanni (1228 A.D.) shows the most marked features of Malayāḷam. *Gṛhamaḍaññu*, *amaiññu*, *taṅgaḷiḍaicānna jaṉam*, and *brahmasommu* are examples. True, some of these words are derived from Samskṛit, but it must be remembered that the Malayāḷam language bears a pronounced element of Samskṛit in its fold.

The lithic record of 404 M.E. Tulām (1228 A.D.) contains the following Malayāḷam words: *Nāṅgaḷ*, *Viḷaiññu*, *irunnaruḷum* and *jñaṅgaḷ*. These are undoubtedly Malayāḷam forms of Tamiḻ words, derived by the nasalisation of some consonants.

The epigraph of 406 M.E (1231 A.D.) in the Dvārakai Emperumān temple, has the following Malayāḷam words—*Irrunnaruḷi;* and *svātantriyam;* the rest of the inscription is in Tamiḷ. Even the record of 432 M.E. (1257 A.D.) of Cokkattāṇḍāḷ, the queen of Vīra Pāṇḍya, bears trace of the Malayāḷam influence. It is clear that the donor herself did not dictate the wording of the inscription; presumably, that responsibility was left to the temple authorities. Malayāḷam words which occur in it are *Ari Aññāhyum, Brāhmaṇabhōjanam* and *Brahmasomil.* Similarly in some of the later epigraphs also, distinctive Malayāḷam words continue to reapppear. For example, in the inscription of 745 M.E. (1570 A.D.) are found the words *'Kanakkinnu' Avanremakan* and *oḷḷa.*

Thus, it is perfectly clear that Malayāḷam words found their way into the Śucīndram inscriptions. But, a remarkable circumstance is that the proportion of the Malāyāḷam words did not increase with the progress of years, as may be reasonably expected. The epigraphs of 724 M.E. (1549 A.D.) and 745 M.E. (1570 A.D.) for instance, evince more or less the same proportion as those of the 13th and 14th centuries A.D. The obvious inference is that the Malayāḷam language was not adopted in toto. It seems to be a case of Tamiḻ surviving the contact with Malayāḷam but for a slight admixture of the new words here and there. The virility of Tamil was apparently responsible for the successful resistance of the new element.

Scripts of the Śucīndram inscriptions : The scripts employed in the inscriptions of Śucīndram have their own lessons to offer. As already mentioned, the early inscriptions are all in Vaṭṭeḻuttu script, and they present marked palaeographic features from period to period. The Vaṭṭeḻuttu gives way early in the 11th century A.D., sometime after the Cōḷa conquest of Pāṇḍināḍ and Nāñcināḍ. In fact, the transition from Vaṭṭeḻuttu to Tamiḷ characters is noticed in Śucīndram during the period of Sundara Cōḷa Pāndya. The inscription of his 9th regnal year (1029 A.D.) actually presents a combination of Vaṭṭeḻuttu and Tamiḷ characters. Although a few epigraphs of the succeeding years show the survival of some Vaṭṭeluttu letters, gradually by the end of 11th century A.D., the pure Tamiḻ script dominates. In this matter, as in several others, Śucīndram toed the line with the rest of Tamiḻ Nāḍ, while higher up, in the "insulated Malai Nāḍu (Malabar), Vaṭṭeḻuttu continued as late as the middle of the 18th century A.D.".[7]

7. T A. S, I, p. 286.

The Grantha script, too, appears in several lithic records of the temple. But, in the epigraphs of the 12th to the 14th century A.D. grantha characters occur interspersed with the Tamiḷ script.[8] The Samskṛit verses engraved in the 15th and 16th centuries are, no doubt, entirely in Grantha characters. In passing it may be observed that the Grantha script (adopted in the Śucīndram temple as elsewhere) reveals the genesis of the Malayālam characters. The resemblance between Grantha and Malayāḷam characters is obviously more than an accidental circumstance. Particularly striking is this feature in the Malayāḷam letters, *ga, ma, sa,* and *ba,* In fact, these similarities confirm the view that the Malayālam script is evolved from Grantha.

Limitations to the inscriptions: Thus, the inscriptions furnish valuable data concerning various aspects of the history of the place. But there is the other side to the picture. The limitations to the value of inscriptions should not be ignored. All that is engraved on stone cannot be taken as gospel truth. In the first place, the actual wording of the inscriptions would not have been completely framed by the donors themselves. The details of the inscription were, more often than not, left to the ingenuity of the śilpi who executed the engraving. And, naturally, the conventional style of framing the epigraphs would have determined in a large measure their form and even their details. This feature accounts for certain otherwise inexplicable anachronisms and incongruous statements figuring in several inscriptions.

Moreover, slips or errors in the actual engraving are occasionally responsible for creating difficulties to the student of history. Slovenliness or inefficiency on the part of the śilpi might have been responsible for some mistakes or unidentifiable words. Several words occurring in the inscriptions of Śucīndram have not been made out. In respect of others, errors have crept in.[9]

Nor does it end here. Exaggerations do appear occasionally to the same extent as in literary euologies of court poets. Particularly, extravagant claims of victories are sometimes registered and fanciful genealogies which are ingeniously framed, frequently find their way into

8. See Inscriptions in the Dvārakai Emperumān temple, Appendix IX.

9. See for example '*Sundaracōlaccaruppati Maṅgalam* (T. A. S., IV, pp. 135, 137 and 138) Note also the name of the place occurring as '*Sujīndiṛam*' (T. A. S., IV, p. 129) and '*Cūḻśucīndrattu*' (T. A. S., IV, p. 105). The most perplexing slip seems to figure in Māravarman Śrīvallabha's inscription which speaks of Śucīndram as 'Sundara-pāṇḍya caturvēdimangalam'

inscriptions. The praśasti or meykīṛti of monarchs appears as a common feature in the inscriptions of the Cōḷās and of the Medieval Pāṇḍyas. Commencing from the time of Rāja Rāja, the 'Praśasti' was usually adopted by kings, and this gave full scope for the fancy of the poet-composer.[10] The result was that often, unreal claims were put up; in fact, these 'meykīṛtikaḷ' occasionally merit the waggish description of them as Poykīṛtikaḷ.[11] Fortunately, the records of the Vēṇāḍ kings and of later Travancore monarchs show more of sobriety.

However, in utilizing the Śucīndram inscriptions, the note of warning sounded by Dr. Burgess in respect of South Indian epigraphs has to be borne in mind. He says: "Inscriptions are, of course, most useful; but they have to be used with caution."

10. See Śucīndram Inscriptions of Vīra Pāndya (T. A. S., II, pp. 18-19), and of Māravarman Śrīvallabha T. A. S., IV, p. 125

11. K. A. N. Sastri: 'The Cōlas' Vol. I, p 7. There is sometimes an unjustifiable tendency to be indulgent towards epigraphical praśastis and hypercritical about literary euologies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

Palm-leaf document, dated 5-7-933 M.E. (February 1758 A.D) regarding the Aṛamvaḷattamman shrine. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha with the kind permission of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar.

933-ാമാണ്ട് മാശിമാസം 5-ാം തിയതി ശ്രുചീന്ദ്രം കോവിലിൽ ശ്രീഭണ്ഡാരക്കാര്യ്യം ചെയ്യ്യാർ മുമ്പാകെ ഇരവിപുത്തൂർ ഭൂതനാഥൻ രാമനാഥനും, വീര്യപ്പെരുമാൾ അയ്യമ്പെരുമാളും, മുത്തുഭൈരവൻ ശങ്കരനും എഴുതി വെച്ച കൈച്ചീട്ടാവിതു്.

ഞങ്ങളുടെ കുടുംബത്തിൽ പൊതു കാരണവാട്ടി പള്ളിയറനാച്ചിയാർ മകൾ അറംവളത്തനാച്ചിയാർ മുൻ 619-ാമാണ്ട് മാശിമാസം 17-ാം തിയതി തിങ്കൾ കിഴമയും മകം നക്ഷത്രവും അന്നു പെരുമാൾ സ്ഥാണുമാലയപ്പെരുമാൾ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ സായൂജ്യം ചേരുകയും മേല്പടി നാച്ചിയാക്കു അന്നാൾ മുതല്ക്കു പള്ളിയറ നാച്ചിയാർ കണക്കാക നിത്യനിദാനം വച്ച നിവേദ്യം വകയ്ക്കു നാൾ ഒന്നുക്കു വെൺപാടി അരി ഒന്നരപ്പടി വീതം ആണ്ടൊന്നുക്കു മാസം 12-ക്കു അരി 68 മരക്കാൽ...മേൽശാന്തി നമ്പൂതിരിമാക്കു മാസം ഒന്നുക്കു നെൽ 2 മരക്കാൽ 2 പടിയും കീഴ് ശാന്തിക്കാക്ക് മേല്പടി വകയ്ക്കു നെൽ 1 മരക്കാൽ 4 പടിയും...വകയ്ക്കു മുൻതുപ്പടിയിൽ ദാനം ചെയ്തു പട്ടയം എഴുതിവെച്ച പടിക്കു നടന്നു വരവെ...

APPENDIX II.

Palm-leaf document dated 31st Āni 1020 M.E. (1845 A.D.), regarding the construction of the Citṛa Sabha. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha with the kind permission of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar.

1020-ാമാണ്ട് ആനിമാസം 21-ാം തിയതി—ശ്രുചീന്ദ്രം കോവിൽ ശ്രീഭണ്ഡാരക്കാര്യ്യം ചെയ്യ്യാർകൾ മുമ്പാകെ ചിത്രസഭയിൽ കാരാണ്മ

പ്രവൃത്തി നടത്തിവരുന്ന മാതേവൻ മാണിക്കവാചകം എഴുതിവെച്ച കൈച്ചീട്ടാവതു്. പറക്കയിൽ കണക്ക ആപത്തുകാത്താൻ മഹാലിംഗത്തിന്റെ പേരമ്മ മാളുക്കുട്ടി മാലയമ്മ ഈ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ ചിത്രസഭ ഉണ്ടാക്കി പൂജ നിവേദ്യം മുതലായവയ്ക്കു വേണ്ടുന്ന വകയും ദേവസ്വം വകയിൽ ഏല്പിച്ചു...

APPENDIX III.

Palm-leaf document, dated Cittirai 1042 M.E. (April 1867 A.D.) regarding Dēvadāsis. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha with the kind permission of the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Sthānikar.

1042-ാമാണ്ടു് ചിത്തിരമാസം—ശുചീന്ദ്രം ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ കുടിക്കാർ പെണ്ണുങ്ങൾക്കു അനുഭവവും പ്രവൃത്തിയും തിട്ടം വരുത്തി എഴുതിയ വരിയോല—94-ാമാണ്ടത്തെ പതിവു കണക്കിൻപടി കരകണക്ക മുതലായതു തിട്ടം വരുത്തിയപ്പോൾ ഈ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ 32 കുടിയും അതിൽ നാടകശാലയിൽ പാർക്കുന്നവർക്കു പ്രവൃത്തി കൂടാതെ അവർക്കും ആട്ടം—പാത്രങ്ങൾക്കും നാളൊന്നുക്കു പേരൊന്നിനു 2 കട്ടിയും തോട്ടവച്ചവർക്കു 1¼ കട്ടിയും റായർ എന്നപേർക്കു 3 കട്ടിയും ആൾ വീതം പോലെ അനുഭവവും...

APPENDIX IV.

Palm-leaf document recording the agreement dated 7-11-990 M.E. (June 1815 A.D.) between the temple authorities and shepherds. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha with the kind permission of the Sthānikar.

990-ാമാണ്ടു് ആനിമാസം 7-ാം തിയതി ശുചീന്ദ്രം കോവിൽ ശ്രീഭണ്ഡാരക്കാര്യം ചെയ്വാർകൾ മുമ്പാകെ മേല്പടി കോവിൽ ഇടമാനേന്തി ഉള്ളിട്ടാർ എഴുതിവെച്ച കൈച്ചീട്ടാവിതു. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ അഭിഷേകം മുതൽ അത്താഴം പൂജ വരെയുള്ള അടിയന്തിരങ്ങൾക്കു പാലും തയിരും മോരും അളന്നു വരുന്ന വകയ്ക്കു മുമ്പിനാലെ ഞങ്ങൾക്കു കാരാണ്മയായിട്ടു

നാളൊന്നിനു ചോററുപുരയിൽ നിന്നും 4 കട്ടി ചോറു വീതം അനുഭവം വെച്ചു ആ വക അനുഭവം വഹിക്കകൊണ്ടു്...

APPENDIX V.

Palm-leaf document dated 4-4-1042 ME. (December 1866 A.D.) regarding the daily recitation of hymns in the temple. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Vaṭṭappaḷḷi Maṭha with the kind permission of the Sthānikar.

ശുചീന്ദ്രം ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ തിരുപ്പാട്ടു വകയ്ക്കു് കാരാണ്മ പതിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളതിന്റേയും ഇല്ലാത്തതിന്റേയും വക കണക്കു് ശോധനചെയ്തു് എഴുതിയ വരി ഓല—1042-ാമാണ്ടു് കാർത്തിക മാസം 4-ാം തിയതി കണക്കു ശോധന ചെയ്താറെ മേലെഴുതിയ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലും കീഴീട്ടു പേരമ്പലത്തിലും തിരുപ്പാട്ടു പാടുന്ന വകയ്ക്കു താണുമാലയപ്പെരുമാൾ പെരിയാരുടെ പേക്കു ഈ പ്രവൃത്തി പതിഞ്ഞിട്ടും അയാൾ ഈ പ്രവൃത്തി നടത്തി...അനുഭവം പററിക്കൊള്ളത്തക്കവണ്ണം 915-ാമാണ്ടു് എഴുതിയിട്ടുള്ള ആചാരക്കണക്കിലും കാണുന്നതല്ലാതെ പിന്നീടു പ്രവൃത്തി നടത്തുന്ന ആളുകൾക്കു ഇന്ന പ്രകാരത്തിൽ അവകാശമെന്നു കണക്കു കാണ്മാനില്ലാത്തതുമാകുന്നു.

APPENDIX VI.

Palm-leaf document dated 23rd Mīnam 979 M.E. (April 1804 A.D.) which records a typical vow pertaining to the Śucīndram Pratyayam. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Tekkumaṇ Maṭha through the kind help of Sri. S. Thanu Pillai, some-time accountant of the Maṭha.

979-ാമാണ്ടു് മീനമാസം 22-ാം തിയതി തിങ്കളാഴ്ചയ്ക്കു തീച്ച് ഏകി 23-ാം തിയതി ചെവ്വാഴ്ചയ്ക്കു കൈമുക്കിയ വകയ്ക്കു് ഉള്ള “പ്രതിജ്ഞാപത്രം.”

“കുററയേരി ദേശത്തു് രാപ്രത്തി കൊക്കന്നാത്തു് യജ്ഞൻ കപാലിക്കു് നരിയോട്ടു ദേശത്തു് കുന്നമംഗലത്തു് ഈതിശ്ശേരി ചന്ദ്രശേഖരൻ കപാ

ഷിടെ ബ്രാഹ്മണിയാളോട് നാരായണൻ പുഷ്ടിയോടുകൂടി ലിംഗയോനി സംബന്ധം ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല"

APPENDIX VII.

Palm-leaf document, dated 5th Vṛscika 1014 M.E. (December 1838 A.D.), which records a typical form of "Pampu" pertaining to the Śucīndram Pratyayam. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Tekkumaṇ Maṭha through the kind help of Sri. S. Thanu Pillai, some-time accountant of the Maṭha.

കൊല്ലം 1014-ാമാണ്ട് വൃശ്ചികമാസം 5-ാം തിയതി ഞായറാഴ്ചയും പൂർവ്വപക്ഷത്തു ദ്വിതീയയും അനിഴവും ഈ നാളിൽ കോയിമ്മ മനുഷ്യം മുമ്പാകെ ആവണംകോട്ടു മൂത്തമനെ നാരായണൻ നമ്പിയാത്തൻ നമ്പി ഭട്ടതിരി പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ചേന്ന കുന്നരിയം ദേശത്തു് തെക്കേടം കേശവൻ ഗണപതി കേശവന്റെ ഇണങ്ങരേയും മീമാംസകന്മാരേയും ഉള്ളിൽ നിത്തി ആവണം എഴുതിയ പട്ടോലക്കരണമാവിതു്.

പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ നടുവത്തു പൊടോർ ഭട്ടതിരി പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ചേന്ന പെരുന്തണ്ണൂരു ദേശത്തു് കുടിയിരിക്കുന്ന പുല്ലേരി കേശവൻ സരസ്വതിയായുള്ള കുന്നരിയം ദേശത്തു് വാരണാസി കൃഷ്ണൻ സരസ്വതിയെ വിചാരിച്ചു് പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ചേന്ന കുന്നരിയം ദേശത്തു് തെക്കേടം കേശവൻ ഗണപതിയുടെ മകൻ കേശവൻ ചൊല്ലുന്ന പ്രതിജ്ഞ. പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ പെരുന്തണ്ണൂർ ദേശത്തു് കുടിയിരിക്കുന്ന പുല്ലേരി കേശവൻ ചൊല്ലുന്ന പ്രതിജ്ഞ.

ഈ പ്രതിജ്ഞ തൊട്ടു ഇതിനടുത്ത മേടമാസത്തിൽ നല്ല ആഴ്ച നാറം ശുചീന്ദ്രത്തു് മുക്കാൽ വട്ടത്തു ചെന്നു് കഴകക്കാരേയും ഒപ്പിച്ചു് കഴകമൂട്ടം തീർത്തു് കോലും പാലികയും ആറും മുമ്പെ കാരയിൽ പിരൽ പിറക്കി....
തെക്കേടം കേശവൻ ഗണപതിയുടെ മകൻ കേശവൻ

ഈ പകർപ്പിൽ ന്യൂനാദികളുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ തിരുത്തി എഴുതിച്ചുകൊള്ളുക.

പട്ടച്ചാത്തിര (കൈയ്യെഴുത്തു്)

APPENDIX VIII.

Palm-leaf document which records a typical 'Śuddhapatram' (Deed of exoneration). The date of the document cannot be made out. The copy is reproduced from the original in the Tekkuman̤ Maṭha through the kind help of Sri. S. Thanu Pillai.

ഹരി: തുലാവ്യാഴം തുലാഞായറു ചൊവ്വാഴ്ച നാൾ ശുചീന്ദ്രത്തു് മുക്കാൽ വട്ടത്തു് മഹാഭാരതക്കഴകത്തു് ഭട്ടതിരിയും പണ്ഡിതസഭയും ശ്രീകാര്യം ചെയ്യോരും കൂടിയിരുന്നെഴുതിയ ശുദ്ധപത്രമാവിതു്.

കിടങ്ങൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ചെമ്പിളാവു ദേശത്തു് മുരുവത്തു മലമേൽ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യനു് ഓണംതിരുത്തി ദേശത്തു പൊടിയൂരു് നാരായണൻ നാരായണന്റെ മകളായ സാവിത്രിയോടുകൂടി ലിംഗയോനി സംബന്ധവും ഉണ്ടായോ എന്നുണ്ടായ ശങ്കകൊണ്ടു് മൂത്തമന ഭട്ടതിരി വിചാരിച്ചു മാടാമേറിച്ചൊല്ലിയിടത്തുണ്ടായ ശങ്കതൊട്ടു് ഓണംതിരുത്തി ദേശത്തു് പൊടിയൂരു് നാരായണൻ നാരായണന്റെ മകളായ സാവിത്രിയോടുകൂടി എനിക്കു ലിംഗയോനി സംബന്ധവും അന്യലിംഗസംബന്ധവും ഇല്ലാ എന്നു് കടിഞ്ഞൂരു് ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ചെമ്പിളാവു ദേശത്തു് മുരുവത്തു് മലമേൽ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യന്റെ പ്രതിജ്ഞ — ഈ പ്രതിജ്ഞ തൊട്ടു — കൊല്ലമാണ്ടു് തുലാമാസം 27-ാം തിയതി തീർച്ച എഴുതിയതിനു് ഞായറാഴ്ച നാൾ പൂർവ്വപക്ഷത്തു ഏകാദശിയും പൂരുരുട്ടാതി നക്ഷത്രവും നാൾ ശുചീന്ദ്രം മുക്കാൽ വട്ടത്തു് മഹാഭാരതക്കഴകത്തു് എത്തി കഴകമുട്ടം തീർത്തു്...മേല്പടി സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ കാരകയിൽ വിരൽ പിറക്കി ഇതിനടുത്ത മൂന്നാം നാൾ മേല്പടി കഴകത്തിൽ വന്നു് കൈകാട്ടി കൈവേകാമയിൽ ശുദ്ധപത്രം കൊടുത്തോം. ശുചീന്ദ്രത്തു് ഭട്ടവർകളും കിടഞ്ഞൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തു് ചെമ്പിള്ളാവു ദേശത്തു് മുരുവത്തു മലമേൽ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യനു്—ഇപ്പടിയ്ക്കു് ശുചീന്ദ്രം മുക്കാൽവട്ടത്തു് മഹാഭാരതമുടയ പൊപ്പനെ അരിച്ചന്ദ്രൻ അരുളിച്ചെയ്തപടി ശുദ്ധപത്രം കൈയെഴുതിയ കറുപ്പൻ പെരുമനായകൻ.

APPENDIX IX

LIST OF THE ŚUCĪNDRAM INSCRIPTIONS

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
1.	Caḍayan Māṟan (Early Pāndyan King). Śrī Māran Śrī Vallabha ?	Regnal year 8 Simha (Cir. 823 A.D).	Tamil in Vaṭṭeluttu	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—gift of sheep for a lamp to be maintained in the temple of Mahādēva at Tiruccivīndiram 21 of 1090—T A R
2	Māran Caḍayan (Early Pāndyan King).	Regnal year 2 plus 1 (Kaṛkatakam).	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of 100 sheep to provide one uri of ghee daily for a lamp in the temple. The donor was Tennavan Uttara Mantiri, by name Iyākki Cellan, a native of Kaniyār palli of Malaināḍu—.T.A.S, IV, p. 117
3.	do.	Regnal year 2 plus 3	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of 5 buffaloes to provide 1 ulakku of ghee daily for a lamp in the temple The donor was a Sēnavarayan by name Tattan Andiri, a native of Tiruveḷḷūr—T A S, III, p. 75
4.	do.	Regnal year 2 plus 3 Mithuna.	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of land purchased from the Mūlaparuda Sabhai for feeding brahmins The donor was Tennavan Toṅgapallavarayan of Veliyāṟrūr. It registers also a gift of gold with which the members of the assembly made the sacred crown and ornaments for Amarabhujanga perumāl. —T.A.S, IV, pp 118-119.
5.	Caḍayan Māran (Early Pāṇḍyan King).	Regnal year 2 plus 10 Makaram 20	Tamil in Vaṭṭeluttu	do	Donatory—Gift of 50 sheep to provide 1 ulakku of ghee in the temple by Kanni-Palañji, an aṛugaivaniyan of Ilakkanduṛai—T A S, IV, p. 123

6	do	Regnal year 2 plus 14	do.	do.	Donatory—Gift of 50 sheep to provide one uḻakku of ghee for a lamp in the temple by Kunṟan Śūlapāṇi, a native of Tenkunavāy, perhaps of the Cēra country—T A S, IV, p 121
7.	Parakēsari-Varman.	Regnal year 34 (941 A D)	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of 50 ewes to supply one Uḻakku of ghee for a lamp in the temple. The donor was Araiyan Aravindan of Talaikkulam of Tennādu—T A.S., I, p 237 and E I, V, p 42.
8.	Parakēsari-Varman Parāntaka I.	Regnal year 40 Kumbha (947 A.D.)	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of a lamp weighing 30 palams and also of 75 ewes to furnish one uḻakku and a half of ghee per day for Emperumān and 25 ewes for one ālākku of ghee for Tiruvēngadanilai of Tiruccivīndiram. The donor was Orugai Arangan, a merchant of Kaiavandapuram in Kalakkudinādu. E I. V, p 43
9	Cōḻan-talai-koṇḍa Vīra Pāṇḍya (Pāndya Dynasty).	Regnal year 4 plus 3	do.	do.	Donatory—Gift of land to the temple of Paramēśvara at Tiruccivīndiram for a lamp to be burnt daily with one uri of ghee for sacred flower-garlands and for the maintenance of a flower-garden and also for certain offerings. The donor was Tennavan Anukkappallavarayan called Araiyan Vīranārāyanan of Urappanūr—T.A S, III, p 69
10.	do	Regnal year 4 plus 4	Tamiḻ in Vatteḻuttu	do.	Appears to be commemorative. From the portion that is not damaged, it is learnt that some victory of the king is mentioned—T A S., III, p. 73.

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
11.	do.	4 plus 6	Tamil in Vatteluttu	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Gift of 50 sheep to provide one ulakku of ghee for a lamp in the temple in Tiruccivīndiram—T.A S, III, p. 74.
12.	do.	13 plus 1	do.	do.	Donatory—Gift of a lamp weighing one tulām for Bhatāra (the deity) of Tiruccivīndiram, a brahmadēya in Nāñcināḍu and a sum of 30 īḻakkāśu from the interest of which one uri of ghee was to be provided for the lamp—T.A S, III, p 72
13.	do.	15 plus 4	do.	On the southern wall of the Kailāsa shrine.	Declaratory—Records that action was taken by the members of the Assembly against those who had purchased or secured on mortgage, lands belonging to the temple—T A S, III, p. 71.
14	Rāja Rāja Kēsarivarman (Rāja Rāja I Cōḻa Emperor).	Regnal year 10 Karkaṭaka (995 A.D)	do.	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Gift of 50 ewes to provide one ulakku of ghee per day for a lamp in the temple of Mahādēva at Tiruccivīndiram, a brahmadēya in Nāñcināḍu. The donor was Malavaraiyan Śenni Kandan of Īḻanādu. Accepting the sheep, the members of the Mūlaparuda Sabhai entrusted them to Padaitturaman Kanaiyān of Vettiṟkudi belonging to the Emperumān—T.A S., I, p. 238, E.I., V, p 44.

15.	do.	Regnal year 14 (999 A.D)	do.	do	Declaratory—Registers the announcement that at the instance of Periyān-Mūvēndavēlār the tax on certain lands in Tenvalanallūr was enhanced from 3 kalam per mā to 3 kalam and 1 tūni and the order that the paddy at the enhanced rate was to be taken to the temple and measured by the bhattārakkal holding three nāli The lands which had been exempted from the taxes were to be supervised by the dēvarkanmis—T A S, IV, p. 129.
16.	do.	Regnal year 15 (1000 A.D.)	do.	do.	Declaratory—The Mūlaparuda Sabhai having intimated the Mahāsabha that they could not any longer collect and remit the iṟai (tax) on the dēvadānas of the temple or manage its affairs, the Mahāsabha ordered that two vāriyars of their choice and the Karanattān must together manage the affairs of the temple thereafter—T.A S, II, pp. 6-7
17.	Jatāvarman Sundara Cōla.	Regnal year 9	Tamiḻ language in Tamiḻ and Vatteḻuttu script combined	do.	Donatory—Gift of 38 cows for burning lamps in the shrine of Tiruvēngadattāḻvār at Śucīndram, alias Sundara Cōla Caturvēdimangalam. The donor was Madhurāntakappēraraiyan, called Kalanivenni, a native of Śankarapādi, living in Kōttāru, alias Mummudicōḻanallūr. The local commandant (Ivvūr padaittalaivan) having obtained the cows, undertakes to supply

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
					1½ measures of ghee daily for the maintenance of the lamps—T.A.S., IV, pp 134-5
18.	Rājēndra (Cōḻa Emperor).	Regnal year 2 (Some year between 1032 and 1041 A.D.)	Tamiḻ language in Tamiḻ script with a few words in Grantha	On the base of the western wall of the Tekkēdam Perumāl shrine	Donatory—Gift of sheep for the maintenance of a lamp. Nāñcinādu is described as a unit under Rāja Rāja Pāndi Mandalam —T A S., VIII, p 1.
19.	Jaṭāvarman alias Uḍaiyār Śrī Pāṇḍya Dēva. (Cōḻa-Pāṇḍya Viceroy).	Regnal year 3	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Gift of 50 sheep for a lamp to Śucīndramudaiya Paramasvāmigal by Dandanāyakam Cōḻamandalattu Vadagarai Rājēndrasinga valanāttu Tiruvalinātlu Marudattūrudaiyān Vēlān Cōḻa-Kēralan, called also as Karikāla Cōḻa Vaitumba rāyan—T.A S, IV, pp. 136-8.
20.	do.	Regnal year 24	do.	do.	Donatory—Records that the assembly of the village sold a piece of land to Abhimāna Cōḻa Viḻupparaiyan, called Vēlār Tennavan Dēvargandan, of Madhurāntaka Caturvēdimangalam in Kurukkainādu for maintaining sacred lamps for Śucīndramudaiya Paramasvāmi—T A S IV, p. 138-39
21.	Jaṭāvarman alias Uḍaiyār Śrī Cōḻa-Pāndya Dēva (Cōḻa-Pāndya Viceroy).	Regnal year 25	do.	do.	Donatory—Records the sale of land by the Village Sabha to Sēnāpati Malayappiccōḻan, called Venkādan Śankaran, of Uttamacōḻanallūr, who

				endowed it to Paramasvāmin for special offerings and for the maintenance of a flower-garden and two lamps.—T.A.S., IV, pp. 132-33.
22. Tennapirān Vīra Kēralan.	Regnal year 10	Tamil language and Vatteluttu script	do	Donatory—Gift of 25 cows for the maintenance of a lamp at the temple in Śucīndram. 25 of 1090—T.A.R. Perhaps the king, Vīra Kēraḷan, was one of the three Pāṇḍyas who were defeated by Rājādhirāja I about 1046 A D.
23. Abhaya-Kulōttuṅga (Cōla Emperor).	Regnal year 32 (1102 A D.)	Tamil Verse and Tamil Script	do	Records that the image of the goddess was set up in the temple of Śucīndram by one Pūvanavan Kāri of Śēyalūrman—T.A.S., IV, p. 130.
24.	301 M.E (1126 A.D.)	Tamil language and script	On the northern outer wall of the first prākāra at the western extremity	Donatory and Commemorative—Registers the fact that Arangan Tiruvikkiraman of Sīvallamangalam set up the image of Umā-Skanda-Sahitam—Tirumēni in the temple of Śucīndram and that a gift of land was bestowed by him for daily offerings to the image. —T A S, VIII, p 32.
25. Māravarman Tribhuvana Cakravarti (Śrīvallabhadēva-Pāndyan King).	Regnal year 8th and 407th day (C 1142 A.D.)	do.	On the northern wall of the first prākāra of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Donatory—Gift of land in Purattāyanādu to meet the daily expenses in the shrine of Kūttādum dēvar and his consort by Māravarman Tribhuvana Cakravartin Śrīvallabhadēva. The inscription describes Śucīndram as Sundara Pāndya Caturvēdimangalam—T A.S, IV, p. 125.

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
26.	Kōdai Kēralavarman (Ruler of Vēnād).	Ko 320 Mīnam (1145 A D)	Tamil language and script.	On the northern outer wall of the first prākāra of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Donatory—Royal gift of 20 mā of irupū vāḻum nilam and 10 mā orupū vāḻum nilam in Tenvalanallūr which was part of Nripaśēkharanallūr, the dēvadāna of Śucīndram, for daily offerings to Mahādēva and Tiruvēngada Nilaiāḻvār The donor was Kōda Kēralavarman, the ruler of Vēnād—T.A S, IV, p 19.
27.	do	do.	do.	do	Declaratory—Registers the royal order that a certain Palli Āndi was to husk the paddy provided by the ruler for the daily use in the temple and that as remuneration, the said Palli Āndi was to receive cooked rice of 2 nāḻi out of the offerings served to Tiruvēṅgadanilai Āḻvār—T A.S, IV, p 20
28.	do.	Ko 325 Vrischika (1150 A.D.)	do.	do	Donatory—Registers the Royal grant through his officers (Adhikārar) of the remaining 30 mā of land in Tenvalanallūr which formed part of Karkāḍu, alias Nripaśēkharanallūr for the provision of 2 nāḻis of rice daily for offerings to Vada-tiruvēṅgadattāḻvār at Śucīndram —T A S, IV, p. 21.
29.			do.	do	Donatory—Records a gift of money, for the shrine of Vada Tiruvēngaḍattāḻvār at Śucīndram—82 of 1096—T A R.

30.		Ko 328 Idavam 8 (1153 A D)	do	On the western outer wall of the first prākāra of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Damaged—the date of the inscription is clearly seen A word nilam can also be made out. Perhaps the inscription records a gift of land—10 of 1107—T A R , T A S , VIII, p 35
31.		Ko 340 (1165 A D)	do.	do	Damaged—The date of the inscription alone can be made out; the rest of it cannot be deciphered. 11 of 1107 T A R—T A S , VIII, p 35
32.	Koṟṟavarman Tribhuvanacakravartigaḷ Śrī Vīra Pāṇḍya Dēva (Pāṇḍyan Ruler).	Last quarter of the 12th century A.D.	Tamiḻ language in Tamiḻ script with some words in Grantha	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Royal grant of 7 vēlis of land described as Adavādutōttam in Puśāngudi in Puṟattāyanādu for offering to Śucīndramudaiya Nainār by Vīra Pāndyan Dēva at the time of his coronation. The meykkīrti (introduction) contains a long list of achievements traditionally attributed to the early Pāndyas. Interesting is the list of officers said to have been associated with the issue of the royal order making the gift, for example, Tirumandira Ōlai; the Sēnāpati, Puravavaritinaikkala—nāyakam; Mukavetti-nāyakam —T A S , II, pp. 18-20.
33.		Ko 362 Tulām 1 (1186 A D)	Tamiḻ language with Tamiḻ script	On the base of the western outer wall of the Cuṟṟumandapa of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Only a fragment is now available. It contains the date and some names of boundaries, apparently of a plot of land that was donated to the temple It appears to be thus a donatory inscription 81 of 1099—T A R
34.		Ko 362 Idavam (1167 A.D.)	do.	do	Fragmentary—Nothing except the date can be made out 73 of 1086.—T A.R.

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
35.		Ko 384 Mīnam	do.	On the north wall of the first prākāra of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Declaratory—It registers the fact that the Sabha of Śucīndram alias Sundara Cōḻa Caturvēdimangalam conferred on Śankaranārāyanan, a vāriyar of Ranasinganādu the responsibility of obtaining the paddy and supplying the required quantity of rice to the temple of Śrīmad-Dvārakai Āḻvār. 84 of 1096—T.A R
36.		Ko 392 Kanni 31 Friday (1216 A.D.)	Tamiḻ language and script with a few words in Grantha	On the base of the western outer wall of the Garbhagrha of the Dvārakai Emperumān Kōil	Donatory—Gift of land for a lamp in the Dvārakai Emperumān temple by the Sabha of Śucīndram assembling in the presence of Gōvinda Prajña Bhitārar Tiruvadi of Cerumukkil. The part played by the latter personality in the history of the Śucīndram temple is interesting—T A S, VIII, pp. 37-38.
37.		Ko 398 Mithunam 6 (1223 A.D.)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	On the western wall of the Vīra Pāndyan Mani Mandapa	Donatory—Gift of 71 accu for Mantrapōnakam i e, offerings accompanied by the chanting of mantrams to Śucīndramudaiya Nainār and for the supply of 12 flower-garlands Śucīndram continues to be described in this inscription also as Sundara Cōḻa Caturvēdimangalam of Nāñcinād. The donor was Kēralan Vikrama Cōḻadēvan—T.A S, VIII, p. 33 The date of this inscription is clearly 398 and not 318 as given in—T A S

38.	Ko 399 (1224 A.D.)	do.	On the base of the western wall and continued on the base of the southern wall of the central shrine of the Dvārakai Emperumān	Donatory—Records a gift of land for a flower-garden to the temple of Dvārakai Emperumān This inscription also records that the endowment was made in the presence of Gōvindaprajña Bhitāra Tiruvadi. 67 of 1086—T.A.R.
39.	Ko 400 (1225 A.D)	do.	On the northern wall of the Mahā Mandapa of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Registers a gift of gold, part of which was to be utilized for maintaining a lamp in the temple of Dvārakai Emperumān and the remainder for making an ornament (paitam) for the image of Śucīndramuḍaiya Nainār The fact that the gifts to the deities of the two temples were recorded in one temple indicates the connection that existed between the two 72 of 1086—T.A R.
40.	Ko 400 (1225 A D.)	do.	On the lower portion of the northern wall of the Ardha Maṇḍapa of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Records a gift of 10 accu, the interest accruing from which was to be used for the maintenance of a lamp in the temple of Dvārakai Emperumān. The donor was one Pallikal Nāyar and it is interesting to find the caste-name of Nāyar being mentioned in this period. 3 of 1107—T.A.R
41.	Ko 402 Kumbham Thursday (1227 A D)	do.	On the base of the north wall of the central shrine of Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Gift of 1½ *mā* of land by Śaṅkaran Uruttiranēn of Pudumāḍam in Śucīndram for the provision of 2½ nāḻis of rice for Śrīmad Dvārakai Emperumān. The fact that Śaṅkaran Uruttiranēn was a subordinate or disciple

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
					(Sisya) of Gōvinda Prajña Bhitārar is contained in this inscription 69 of 1086—T A R.
42.		Ko 403 plus 1 Kanni (1228 A D)	Tamil language with a few Samskrit and Malayalam words. The script is Tamil, Samskrit words are in Grantha script	On the wall of the Vīra Pāndyan Mani Mandapa i e. on the western outer wall of the Udayamārtānda Mandapa	Declaratory—Registers the decision of the Urālars (Urānmaikkārs) that the property of the temple was to be enjoyed by the assembly of the temple and that those who happened to alienate any portion of the property by mortgage or sale to any one outside the village were to be fined 12 Kalañju and 5 Kānams of gold The epigraph further declares that the affairs of the temple and of the village were to be controlled by the elders of the assembly. This inscription furnishes a glimpse of the new organization acquiring control over the temple and its property.—T.A S, VIII, p 23.
43.		Ko 404 (1228 A D)	Tamil language and Tamil script	On the base of the western wall of the central shrine of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—The inscription is damaged, but from the portion made out it seems to register a gift of land This record also mentions Gōvinda Prajña Bhitārar 68 of 1086—T.A.R
44.		Ko 404 Tulām (1228 A.D)	do.	On the base of the southern wall of the Ardha Mandapa of	Donatory—Registers a gift by the Sabha of Śucīndram of certain tank-beds reclaimed for cultivation as an

			the Dvārakai Emperumān temple.	endowment for Dvārakai Emperumān. Gōvinda-Prajña Bhitārar was present on the occasion when the Sabha bestowed the gift—T.A.S., VIII, pp. 35-36.
45.	Ko 404 Dhanu, Tuesday (1229 A D)	Tamil language and Tamil script; some proper names are engraved in Grantha	On the base of the western wall of the Garbhagṛha of Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Gift of land for offerings to Dvārakai Emperumān by Kannan—47 of 1108—T.A.R
46	Ko 404 Dhanu (1229 A D)	do.	On the base of the south wall of the central shrine of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Gift of land by Kēśavan Aranganēn of Pudumādam for offerings to Śrīmad Dvārakai Viṣnu. The yield from the land was to be entrusted to the subordinate (Śisya) of Gōvinda-prajña Bhitārar for the proper conduct of the offerings—T.A S., VIII, p. 36.
47.	Ko 404 (1229 A D)	do.	On the base of the south wall of the Ardha Mandapa of Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Gift of land the proceeds of which were to be entrusted to the Śisya of Gōvinda-prajña Bhitārar The donor's name cannot be made out 66 of 1086—T A R
48	Probably Ko 404 Mithunam 2 (1229 A D.)	do.	On a small boulder in the prākāra of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Donatory—Appears to record gift of land to the temple It is built in at the beginning The record refers to Gōvindaprajña Bhitārar Tiruvadi and also one Śrīsālagrāma Bhagvān 82 of 1091—T.A.R
49.	Ko 406 Kanni (1230 A.D.)	do.	On the base of the northern wall of the Dvārakai Emperumān temple	Declaratory—The Mahāsabha and the Sabha of Śucīndram assembling together in the presence of Gōvinda-prajña Bhitārar decided to surrender

No	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
					the control over the Śāntikkār of the Dvārakai temple to the Bhitārar and to entrust the Great Tiruvadi of Tiruvandrum with that control, after the period of Gōvinda prajña Bhitārar. 70 of 1086—T A R
50.		Ko 413 Mēdam, 1 (1238 A D)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	On the base of the southern wall of the Subrahmania shrine in the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Commemorative—Perhaps part of the inscription is buried underground. The inscription appears to record the establishment of the Subrahmaṇiosvāmy shrine.—T.A.S , VIII, p. 32.
51.		Ko 413 Mēdam, 5 (1238 A D)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script a few words are in Grantha	On the wall of the old Vāhanappura near the Kailāsa shrine	Records the construction of the Mukha Mandapa, Ṛsabha Maṇḍapa etc. in front of Vadakkēḍam in place of the old wooden structures. The name of the king who provided these embellishments is not mentioned, but, from the given date, it may be inferred that the monarch was Śrī Vīra Ravi Kērala varma of Vēnād (Unpublished).
52.		Ko 421 Mithuna, 28 (1246 A D)	do.	On the western outer wall of the porch in front of the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Gift of ten Pudduppon accu for a lamp to Śucīndramudaiya Naināṛ by Paraśivadēvan Śucīndravāsi 32 of 1090—T.A.R.

53.	Vīra Pāndya.	Ko 432 Dhanu, 19 Thursday. (1256 A.D)	Tamil language and Tamil script—a few words appear in Grantha and a few others in old Vatteluttu	On the western outer wall of the first prākāra of the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Donatory—Registers the deed of agreement between the Sabha and the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār on the one hand and Ulagamulutudayāl (alias Cokkattāndāl) on the other, the latter endowing a gift of 200 Puduppon accu for sacred offerings and the feeding of three brahmins daily and the former entrusting the amount to various responsible people to fulfil the conditions of the endowment. —T A S, VIII, p. 34 and J O.R, 1934, pp. 124-25.
54	Kō-Māṛavarman Tṛibhuvana cakravartigal Śrī Vīra Pāndya (Pāndyan King).	Regnal year 2 plus 5 Mithuna 5 (1351 A D)	Tamil language and script. with a few words engraved in Grantha	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Registers a royal gift of land for conducting Vīra Pāndyan Sandhi in the temple of Śucīndramudaiya Naināṛ. The Sandhi was the sacred pūjā at night (Tiruvottasāma). It is interesting to find here a reference to this pūjā, which according to the Sthalapurāna, is believed to be conducted by Indra every night.
55.	Mārtāndavarma (Travancore King)	Ko 586 Tulām (1410 A D)	Samskrit verse in Grantha script.	(1) On the northern wall of the Vīra Pāndyan Mani Mandapa (2) The same verse is also inscribed on a pillar in the Mandapa south of the Pañcalinga shrines	Commemorative—Registers that Mārtāndavarman constructed a Sabha or hall in the Śiva temple at Śucīndram. —T A S, VIII, p 28

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
56.	Jatilavarman Tribhuvanacakravartin Parākrama Dēva (Pāndyan King).	Regnal year 28 (1450 A.D.)	Tamil language and script	On the west wall of the Vīra Pāndyan Mani Mandapa	Donatory—Records the royal gift of land for conducting the Parākrama Pāṇḍyan Sandhi Pūjā, in his name on the Mṛigasīrṣa Naksatṛa, the natal star of the king.—T.A.S., I, p 281
57	Śrī Vīra Rāma Śrī Rāma Varma.	Ko 646 Cittiri 12 (1471 A.D.)	do	On the northern wall of the Cempakarāman Maṇḍapa in the Sthānunātha-svāmy temple	Donatory—A rich grant of lands in Śucīndram and also in Kadigaipattinam of Kurunāḍu as well as money for the conduct of the Cempakarāman Pūjā and other rites for Śucīndramudaiya Nainār Umayammai Nāccıyār and Tentiruvēṅgaḍa vinnavar. The endowment was granted while the king was seated in the Cempakarāman Mandapa.—T.A.S., IV, pp. 94-96.
58.	Śrī Vīrarāma Vīra Mārtānda	Ko 646 Idavam, 27. (1471 A.D.)	Tamil language and Tamil script	On a pillar in the bathing ghat of the tank to the north of the temple	Records the construction of the sacred tank, well and bathing ghat by Śrī Vīra Rāma Mārtāṇḍa varma Śrī Kulaśēkharapperumāl (Unpublished).
59.	Rāmavarma (Vēnād ruler).	Ko 654 Tulām Monday (1478 A.D.)	Samskrit verse in Grantha script	On the inner face at the eastern end of the northern façade of the Cempakarāman Mandapa	Records the construction of the Cempakarāman Mandapa by the king, Rāmavarma.—T.A.S., VIII, p 23

60	Āditya Varma alias Jayatunganāttu Mūtta Tiruvadi (Travancore King).	Ko 659 Māśi 14 (1484 A.D.)	Tamil language and Tamil script	On the outer face of the southern wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa. A few words in the opening part of each line are separated by a wall recently constructed	Declaratory—Registers a royal proclamation abolishing the obnoxious tax known as Laksābhōgam and assuring immunity from illegal exactions and other royal interference. An important inscription throwing light on the land revenue system of the day. (Unpublished).
61.	Iravivarma Tiruppāppūr Mūtta Tiruvadi (Travancore King).	Ko 665 Āvani 21 (1489 A.D.)	do	On the southern face of the rock outside the enclosure of the Kailāsa shrine	Donatory—Records a royal gift of 5 mā of land to the temple of Śucīndramudaiya Nainār for offerings at Usa pūjā every day, and the celebration of the king's birthday (on Pūrattāti in Māśi) by special abhisēkha to the god and goddess in the temple. The land was entrusted to Perumāl Rāyar who belonged to the highest rank among the Dēvadāsis of the temple, for the provision of the specified articles required for the various celebrations. (Unpublished)
62.	Śankaranārāyaṇa Venṟu-Mankoṇḍa Bhūtalavīra Udayamārtānda Varman alias Tiruppāppūr Muttavar of Jayasimhanād (Travancore King)	Ko 710 Māśi 23 Sunday (1535 A.D.)	do	On the rock near the Kailāsa shrine. This is the top-most inscription on the southern side of the rock on which the Kailāsa shrine stands	Donatory—Registers a royal grant of lands in Tāḻakudi to the temple of Śucīndramudaiya Nainār, signed by Rāman Rāman and Ayyan, the architects and Tendīccuramuḍaiyān, the engraver of the inscription. 89 of 1096—T.A.R.
63.	Venṟumankoṇḍa Bhūtalavīra Rāmavarman	Ko 712 Cittirai 19 (1537 A.D.)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	do.	Donatory—Records the royal grant of land in Irukkanduṟai of Panagudi Muṟattanādū for the conduct of Uda-

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
					yamārtānda Sandhi at the temple of Śivindi amudaiya Nainār. The donor was Venṟumankonda Bhūtalavīra Rāmavarman, and evidently the Pūjā was instituted in the name of his predecessor —T A S, IV, pp 102-3.
64	Sakalakalai Mārtanda-varma alias Ciravāy Mūtta Tiruvaḍi.	Ko 716 Āni 9 Monday (1541 A.D)	do.	On the western face of the entrance found on the southern wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa	Declaratory—Registers the King's decision that the supply of water to the Dēvadāna lands in Tērūr shall be regulated in proportion to the total acerage of land under each head, so that neither the Dēvadāna lands nor the public lands should suffer. 70 of 1092—T.A.R.
65.	Viṭṭhala Rāja (Vijayanagar).	Ko 720 Āvani (1544 A.D)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script with some Samskrit words in Grantha	On the northern door-way of the Gōpura in the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple	Records that Vitthalēśa and his younger brother constructed the Gōpura of the temple 5 of 1111—T.A R.
66	Venṟumankonḍa Bhūtalavīra Vīrakēralavarman (Travancore King)	Ko 720 Kārtikai 27 (1544 A D)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	On the western side of an entrance on the north wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa near the Dhvajastambha of the Perumāḷ shrine	Declaratory—Registers the royal order appointing one Udaiyānkutti Dikkellām pugaḻumperumāl as the accountant of the temple treasury of Śucīndram, and sanctioning him the customary remuneration, rights and privileges —T A S, IV, p 104

67.	do.	Ko 720 Mārkaḻi 14 (1544 A.D)	do	On the eastern outerwall of the Cempakarāman Manḍāpa near the Dhvajastambha of the Perumāl shrine	Declaratory—Registers that the Sabha, the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār and accountants executed a deed in favour of Kanakku Udaiyānkutti Dikkellāmpugaḻumperumāl, who was to maintain the accounts of the temple treasury and enjoy the customary rights, aḍukkamatu, etc, besides the yield of a plot of land given to him—T.A S, VIII, pp. 1-2.
68.	Śankaranārāyaṇan Mūṛtivēlaikāran Venṟumankonda Vīra Bhūtala Rāmavarma of Jayatuṅganādu (Travancore King).	Ko 722 Tulām 26	do.	On the northern wall of the gateway of the Gōpura	Donatory—Royal grant of 20 Kōttas of paddy which formed the tax due from those dēvadāna lands which had not been granted *naiyili* for offerings, Śrībali procession, etc., for Tenuruvēngada Vinnavar Emperumān to be undertaken on the Rōhini Naksatra, the natal star of Vitthala Mahārāja
69.		Ko 722 Ādi 14 (1547 A D)	do.	On the eastern outerwall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa in the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple near the Dhvajastambha of Vadakkēdam	Donatory—Records gift of land for conducting the service of Cempakarāman Sandhi in the temple—12 of 1112—T.A.R.
70.		Ko 724 Māśi 14 Saturday (1549 A D.)	Tamiḻ language with a few Malayālam words Tamiḻ script	On the outer face of the eastern wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa near the Dhvajastambha of the Perumāl shrine	Declaratory—Registers the appointment of Iccan Nambi Sāmantan as an accountant. The deed of appointment is in the nature of Ādicandēśvara pramānam, executed by the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār, the members of the Sabha

No	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
					and the accountants The names of the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār are appended as signatories. 689 of 1092—T A.R.
71.		Ko 745 Ṛsabha 28 Thursday (1570 A.D.)	Tamil̲ language and script with a few Malayālam words	On the eastern side of the entrance found on the wall of the Cempakarāman Mandapa	Declaratory—Registers the appointment of Tampy Ādiccan Ādiccan of Tiruvāttār as the accountant of the sacred treasury of the temple. The deed of appointment is in the nature of Ādicanḍēśvara pramānam 69 of 1092—T A R.
72.		Ko 757 Alpaśi 28 Saturday (1581 A.D.)	Tamil̲ language and Tamil̲ script	On the eastern outerwall of Cempakarāman Māndapa near the Dhvajastambha of Tekkēdam	Donatory—Records the gift of a gold pot (Kuḍam) and a gold tali to the temple at Śucīndram. Donor was one Iccammaikutti Ammai of Tiruvāttaru 59 of 1092—T A R.
73.		Ko 759 Kārtikai 20 (1583 A.D)	Tamil̲ language and Tamil̲ script	On a pillar in the Iḷayanayinār Mandapa in front of the Subrahmaniasvāmy shrine	Records that Sītammāl̲, daughter of Mālaikkutty of Kēralapuram, provided certain embellishments to the Subrahmaniasvāmy shrine Probably the Ilayanayinār Manḍapa was constructed by her. (Unpublished).
74.		Ko 759 Tai, 25 (1584 A.D.)	do.	On a western pillar of the Ūñcal Mandapa above the sculpture of Karna	Registers the fact that one Māitāndakkutty erected a pillar of the Ūñcal Mandapa (Unpubished)

75.	Ko 766 Mārkaḻi, 13 (1590 A.D.)	do.	On the southern wall of the Gōpura gateway	Donatory—Records a gift of 40 panam for a lamp to be maintained near the image of Nandiśvarar Tampirān. 59 of 1082—T A R
76.	Ko 768 (1593 A D)	Samskrit verse in Grantha script	On the central lintel in the Jayantīsvara Mandapa	Records the fact that the brahmin Śivīndravāsi of Puttillam consecrated the images of Śiva and Gauri in the temple —T A S., VIII, p 32
77.	Ko 772 (1596 A D)	Tamiḻ language and Tamiḻ script	On the lintel of the entrance to the Ardhamandapa of the Pērambalam shrine in South Street	Only the first line of the inscription can be deciphered ; it reveals that in 772 M E. Śēndan Śucīndravāsi of Puttillam provided some embellishment to the shrine. (Unpublished).
78.	Ko 781 Ādi, 17 (1606 A D)	do.	On a stone slab found near the Piḷḷayār Kōil, located in the Sannadhi Street	Records that Śēndan Śivīndravāsi of Puttillam erected a shrine for Kulaśēkhara Pillayār in the Sannadhi Street and endowed some land for the daily offerings and for certain other ceremonies —T A S , VIII, p. 24.
79.	Ko 795 Kārtikai, 8 (1620 A.D)	do.	On the southern wall of the Gōpura gateway	Donatory—Records that the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār made an endowment for conducting the Kārtikai festival in the temple and for burning a bonfire. 55 of 1092—T A R
80.	Ko 796 Mārkaḻi, 14 (1620 A.D)	do.	do	Donatory—Gift of a lamp. The inscription is in a very damaged condition; only a few words can be made out.
81.	Ko 796 Mārkaḻi, 4 (1620 A.D)	do	do	Donatory—A gift of money by Nāgammai of Tērūr for the erection of a lamp-bearer in the Sthānunāthasvāmy temple and for the maintenance of the lamp. 107 of 1096—T A R

No.	King and Dynasty	Date	Language and Script	Place	Summary of contents
82.		Ko 804 Āvani, 17 (1628 A D.)	do	On the top of the pillar bearing the sculpture of Kāli in the Citra Sabha	Records the sadāsēvai (perpetual worship) of one Tondaimān Pandāram. (Unpublished).
83.		Ko 805 Alpaśi, 10 (1629 A D.)	do.	On the northern wall of the Gōpura gateway	Donatory—Records the gift-deed executed by Rāman Tiruvadi Ammāl of Mullamangalam with the Śrīkāryam Ceyvār paying 100 fanams for maintaining a lamp in the shrine of Śankaranārāyana. 66 of 1092—T.A R.
84.		Ko 805 (1630 A.D.)	do.	On the top of the pillar bearing the sculpture of Vyāghrapāda in the Citra Sabha	Records the sadāsēvai of one Vināyakapperumāl of Arumainallūr. (Unpublished).
85.		Ko 817 Ādi (1642 A.D.)	do.	On the eastern wall of the Munnūrrunankai Amman shrine, located to the north of the Teppakkulam	Donatory—Records a gift of lands by Mādukkutty, a Dēvadāsi, for the celebration of a festival in the shrine on the Pūra Naksatra of every Ādi. 33 of 1093—T A R
86.		Ko 820 (1645 A.D.)	do.	On a pillar at the southern wing of the Dhvajastambha Mandapa, near the Tekkēdam Dhvajastambha	Records that this particular pillar was constructed by Śēndan Śucīndravādi Nangayya Ammai. (Unpublished).

87.	Ko 865 Māśi, 29 (1690 A.D.)	do.	On the lintel of the entrance to the Krsnasvāmy Kōil, located at the western end of the Irattaitteruvu	States that Teivankaladiyān Tānuvan constructed the Mukha Mandapa in front of the Kērala Viṇṇavar Emperumān temple. The epigraph reveals that Śucīndram was described also as 'Vīra Kēraḷa Caturvēdimangalam'. (Unpublished).
88.	Ko 880 Māśi, 26 Thursday (1705 A.D.)	do.	On the four sides of a stone slab erected in the court-yard to the west of the Gōpura.	Records the settlement of the temple's Accounts between the Government Officials and the Sabha as ordered by the ruler The amount of paddy to be paid by each Śrīkāryam, and the time of payment are specified. 6 of 1111—T.A.R
89.	Ko 891 Alpaśi, 18 (1715 A.D.)	do.	On the stone slab, formerly used in connection with the Vasanta festival in Tekkēdam, but now found in the Citra Sabha	Records the Sadāsēvai of Savarikittinan Īccuramūrty, one of the inhabitants of Akkarai who had made the necessary endowments for the conduct of the Vasanta festival in the Tekkēdam shrine.
90.	Ko 932 Kārtikai, 20 Wednesday (1757 A.D.)	do.	On a stone slab set up in a private house in Kākkumūr, near Śucīndram	The inscription is in a damaged state It appears to record an endowment of land. 6 of 1103—T.A.R.
91. Śrī Mūlam Tirunāḷ (Travancore).	Ko 1063 (1888 A.D.)	do	On a stone slab erected to the east of Citṛa Sabha	Records that the construction of the Gōpura was begun in 1056 M.E. under Viśākham Tirunāl Mahārāja and completed in 1063 M.E.

Seventeen undated inscriptions of Śucīndram are in an ill-preserved condition, little can be made out from them. They have been referred to in the Annual Reports of Travancore, as indicated below.

1. 71 of 1086 M.E.	7. 54 of 1092 M E	13. 71 of 1092 M.E.
2 74 of 1086 M E	8. 67 of 1092 M E	14 3 of 1103 M.E.
3. 28 of 1090 M E.	9. 61 of 1092 M.E	15. 4 of 1103 M.E
4. 22 of 1090 M E	10 62 of 1092 M E.	16 4 of 1105 M E
5. 52 of 1092 M.E.	11 63 of 1092 M E.	17. 39 of 1108 M E
6. 63 of 1092 M E	12 64 of 1092 M E	

AN IMPORTANT PALM-LEAF RECORD

Vīra Kērala Varman King of Vēnād	Ko 305 Mēda 6, Attam (1130 A D)	Malayālam language and Malayālam Script

The record is a re-copy of the original, dated Ko 305 Mēda 6 Attam, and the re-copy has been made on Ko 865 Cittirai 9, it states that the then Vattappaḷḷi Pattar died without heirs and there was none in the family to hold the title of Vattappalli Nārāyanan Sunaran of Padiññārē Idam of Vaikkam, his wife and son were installed as Vattappalli and they were ordered to perform the duties of Vattappalli and to enjoy the privileges thereof—T A R, 1103.

I am very grateful to the Director of Archaeology, Travancore, for kindly permitting me to peruse the Archaeological reports and the original manuscripts.

Abhaya mudra	Protection-affording hand pose.
Abhanga	Standing pose without bend
Abhisēkha	Sacred anointing of images.
Ācārakkanakku	Account pertaining to ceremonies and observances in the temple.
Adistānam	Base.
Advaita	The doctrine of non-duality in Hindu philosophy.
Adyūtam	Innermost chamber of the shrine.
Aksamāla	Rosary of beads.
Āḻvār	A vaisnava saint, a king or ruler in ancient Kērala.
Amalaka	A melon-shaped member on a spire.
Amman	Goddess
Angi	A metal mask or cover for an icon.
Anjali hasta	Hand pose in which both the hands are clasped together in the form of worship.
Ankuśa	A weapon consisting of a sharp metal hook attached to a wooden handle. (Used as elephant goad).
Ardha Manḍapa	Hall in front of the main shrine.
Āsana	A position—a seat—a sitting pose.
Aṣṭabandha, Asṭabandhanam	Refixing of an image.
Astadikpālās	The eight guardians—four of the cardinal and four intermediate points of the compass.
Astāgrattil Ādhyānmār	The heads of eight leading learned families among the Nambūdiris of Kērala.
Āvaḍai	Pedestal on which the Śiva liṅga is fixed.
Bāṇa	Arrow.
Bali	Offering of cooked rice for minor deities.
Bali Pīṭha	The stone pedestal on which Bali is offered.
Balustrade	A small pillar supporting a handrail.
Base	Lower portion of any structure or feature.
Bas-relief	Carving on low relief or projection.
Bhōgamūrti	Image used on ceremonial occasions.
Bōdigai	Projecting bracket or corbel of a Capital.
Bulbous	Shaped like a bulb, nearly spherical.
Cakṛa	Wheel-shaped symbol carried by Visnu.
Cannavīra	An ornament worn across the two shoulders on the chest, appearing to be in the form of two Yajñōpavītas.

Canopy	..	Covering over a niche.
Capital	..	Upper portion of a column, pillar or pilaster.
Ceiling	..	Covering surface under roof.
Cella	..	Small chamber for the image.
Chāmara	..	Fly wisk.
Corbel	..	Blocks of stone, projecting from a wall or pillar brackets.
Cupola	..	Spherical roof.
Cornice	..	Any crowning portion or projection.
Dais	..	Raised pedestal.
Danda	.	Stick.
Dāmaru	..	A small drum with a hollow body open at both ends.
Dēva	..	God.
Dēvadāna	..	Land settled as a gift on a deity.
Dēvadāsis	..	Women servants of God, attached to temple.
Dēvasvam	..	House of God—the Malayalam term denoting temple.
Dēvatāhvānam	.	Invocation to deity by special mantras.
Dewan	..	The Chief Minister of Travancore in the past.
Dhanus	..	Bow, Month of Mārkaḻi.
Dhūpa	..	Incense.
Dhyānam	..	Meditation.
Dīpārādhana	..	Worship accompanied by the waving of lights.
Dhruvabēras	..	Fixed images.
Dhvajam	..	Flag.
Dhvajastambha	.	Flag-staff in the temple.
Dhvajārōhana	..	Flag-hoisting ceremony, inaugurating the festival.
Dvārapālaka	.	Figure placed at the gates of temples as guards.
Dvibhanga	..	Standing pose with two bends.
Eaves	..	Lower portion of a roof projecting beyond the face of the wall.
Entablature	..	Upper portion of a structure supported by a colonade.
Ēkādaśi	..	The 11th day after Full Moon or New Moon.
Façade	..	Front view or elevation.
Fanam	..	Travancore coin roughly equivalent to two annas.
Finial	..	Finishing portion of a pinnacle.
Frieze	..	Upper border; middle division of entablature.
Gada	..	Ordinary Indian Club.
Gable	..	Triangular portion of roof.
Gana	..	Group.
Garbhargṛaha	..	The sanctum of the shrine.

Ghee	..	Clarified butter.
Gōpura	..	The Tower of a temple.
Gōsāyis	..	A set of wandering pilgrims from North India.
Gōsa	..	The practice of women observing seclusion.
Gul	..	Raw cane-sugar.
Hamsa	..	Swan.
Hypostyle	..	Pillared hall.
Iconography	..	Illustration of subject by figures or drawings.
Idayan	..	A Tamil caste of herdsmen, shepherds, cattle-breeders and milkmen in South India.
Idaṅgaḻi	..	A measure containing 80 cubic inches, used for measuring grain or liquid.
Illam	..	A house; commonly used to denote the house of a Nambūdiri
Iḻavan	..	A Tamil caste whose original occupation was toddy-drawing; they are believed to have come from Ceylon, or from Indonesia by way of Ceylon.
Jālar	..	Time-keeping cymbals used in Indian Music.
Jatāmakuta	..	The matted hair done into the form of a tall cap.
Jamb	..	Sides of the openings of doors and windows.
Jenmi	..	The proprietor of land.
Jñānamudra	..	The pose of the hand in which the tips of the middle finger and of the thumb are joined together and held near the heart, with the palm of the hand turned towards the heart.
Kaduśarkarai	..	A paste made of molasses, mustard, myrobalam, etc., of which images are made.
Kalaśam	..	An ornamental pot decorating the finials and capitals Also a purificatory ceremony performed in temples.
Kalyānam	..	Marriage.
Kalyāna Maṇḍapam	..	Hall where the marriage of the deity is celebrated annually.
Kanakku	..	Accounts.
Kapāla	..	Skull; Begging bowl.
Karandamakuta	..	A crown made in the form of a bowl-shaped vessel.
Kaṭaka hasta	..	The pose of the hand wherein the tips of the fingers are loosely applied to the thumb so as to form a ring.
Kātyāvalambita	..	The pose of the hand when the arm is let down hanging by the side of the body and the hand is made to rest on the loin.

Khētaka	Shield, circular or quadrangular in shape.
Kindi	A small pewter vessel with a spout in the middle.
Kirīṭamakuta	A conical cap sometimes ending in an ornamental top with a central pointed knob.
Kodiyēṟṟu	Flag-hoisting ceremony which indicates the commencement of the Festival.
Kūdu	Antefix; foliated arch in South Indian temples.
Kumbhapañjaram	Recessed pilasters bearing a vase-like motif at the base.
Kundala	Ear-ornament.
Kūrmāsana	Sitting pose in the shape of a tortoise.
Labyrinth	Irregular structure of many intricate passages.
Lintel	Beam, the timber or stone covering of an opening.
Madappalli	The kitchen-room in a temple or house.
Makarakuṇḍala	Ear-ornament formed in the shape of a crocodile.
Mandapa	Large open hall.
Mantra	A hymn or prayer to god
Matha	A holy institution; in Travancore, the house of a brahmin is also called a 'Matha'.
Mayūra	Peacock.
Mīmāmsakars	Nambūdiris well versed in Law, who are appointed for deciding cases of sexual offence.
Namaskāram	Making obeisance to elders. Also prostration. In Travancore, the feeding of a few brahmins in temples is known by the same name.
Nambūdiris	A caste of top-ranking Malayāli Brahmins, noted for their orthodoxy and their distinctive customs and manners.
Nandimaṇḍapa	Pavilion erected over the sacred bull. It is otherwise known as 'Ṛsabhamaṇḍapa'.
Nātakaśālai (Nātakaśāla)	A hall where dances and dramas are enacted.
Nāttār	The people. In Travancore, the term denoted the people of Nāñcināḍ.
Nattuvan	A name of teacher of dancing girls.
Neivēdya (Neivēdyam)	Oblation.
Nirmālyam	Flowers and garlands which had adorned an image on the previous evening.
Nīṭṭu	A royal writ or commission.
Occan	A caste of temple priests in village shrines; they serve also as drummers and pipers.
Order	In Architecture, it represents a column with its base, shaft and capital together with the entablature which it supports.

Padmam	Moulding presenting the curves of the lotus petal.
Padmāsana	A sitting pose where the two legs are kept crossed so that the feet are brought to rest upon the thighs.
Pagoda	Tail structure in several storeys. Commonly it is used as an alternative for temple.
Palagai	Square member forming the upper portion of Capital.
Pañcagavyam	A preparation of the five essences of cow used for purification.
Pañcāyat	A court of enquiry or arbitration, usually consisting of five or more members.
Pāśam	A noose formed with a rope.
Pativu Kanakku	A fixed or permanent account regulating the expenditure of the temple.
Pāttam	A form of lease
Pediment	Termination of the roof.
Pidāgai	An administrative subdivision of a Taluk in the past.
Pilaster	Pillar projecting from a wall.
Pītha	Pedestal or base.
Plinth	Base or lower portion of a building or column
Prabhāmandala	A decorative motif, suggestive of a halo of light, surrounding the head.
Prākāra	Passage around the shrine.
Prastaram	Entablature
Prāyascittam	Atonement for a fault or crime.
Puspabōdigai	Projecting corbel which hangs down like a flower.
Ratha	Temple car.
Rudrākṣa	Beads used in counting japams or chanting hymns.
Risi	A learned sage.
Sabhā Maṇḍapa	Assembly Hall It denoted also the Hall of Śiva's Dance.
Sādhanam	A communication addressed by the Travancore Government to the subordinate officers.
Samabhaṅga	Standing posture with the medium bend, wherein the figure stands with the right leg slightly bent and the left leg firmly placed on the ground.
Sampādasthānaka	Standing posture with feet at the same level.
Śaṅkha	Chank shell, usually found in one of the hands of Visnu.
Śāntikkāran	Temple priest who offers the oblation to the deity.
Sēsa	Serpent deity.
Shaft	Portion of a column between base and Capital.
Śilpi	Engraver, smith, artisan.
Sōpānam	Flight of steps.
Stambha	Small column or pillar.

Stucco	..	Plaster or cement used for coating the surface.
Sukhāsana	..	A comfortable sitting posture with one leg hanging down and the other bent cross-wise so as to lie flat on a pedestal.
Sukhanāsi	..	Vestibule leading to a temple.
Stylobate	..	The base on which a colonnade is placed.
Svayambhu	..	Natural-born.
Tādi	..	The finial of a kalaśam; a kind of necking in a Capital.
Tālikettu	..	The ceremony of tying the tāli (Marriage symbol) round the neck of the bride.
Tāndava	..	Dance of Śiva.
Tantras	..	The name given to a numerous class of religious and magical works, generally of later date than the Purānas.
Tēr	..	Tamil word denoting Temple Car.
Tilaka	..	A mark applied to the forehead, often indicating caste.
Tōrana	..	Gateway presenting decoration.
Triśūla	..	Trident, an emblem of Śiva.
Ubapītha (Ubapītam)		Pedestal or base of a structure.
Upāna (Upānam)	..	Pedestal of a pillar.
Utkutika Āsana	..	Posture in which the person sits with his heels kept close to the bottom and with the back slightly curved.
Utsava	..	A temple festival.
Vāhana	..	Vehicle.
Varada	..	Hand pose where the palm of the left hand, with the fingers pointing downwards, is exposed to the observer.
Vellāla	..	A Tamil caste of cultivators and land-owners.
Vēttai	..	A mock hunt staged as part of the Utsava.
Vigraha	..	Icon or image.
Vritam	..	A fast or religious observance.
Yāli	..	An imaginary creature having the features of a lion and the trunk of an elephant.
Yaksa	..	Semi-divine being.
Yogam	..	An assembly or congregation.
Yōgamudra	..	Pose of the hands in which the palm of the right hand is placed in that of the left and both together are laid on the crossed legs of the seated person or image.
Yuga	..	A cycle of time according to the Purānas.
Yajñōpavīta	..	Holy thread across the shoulder.

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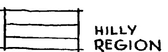
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Travancore Government Gazette.

ILLUSTRATIONS

NĀÑCINĀḌ

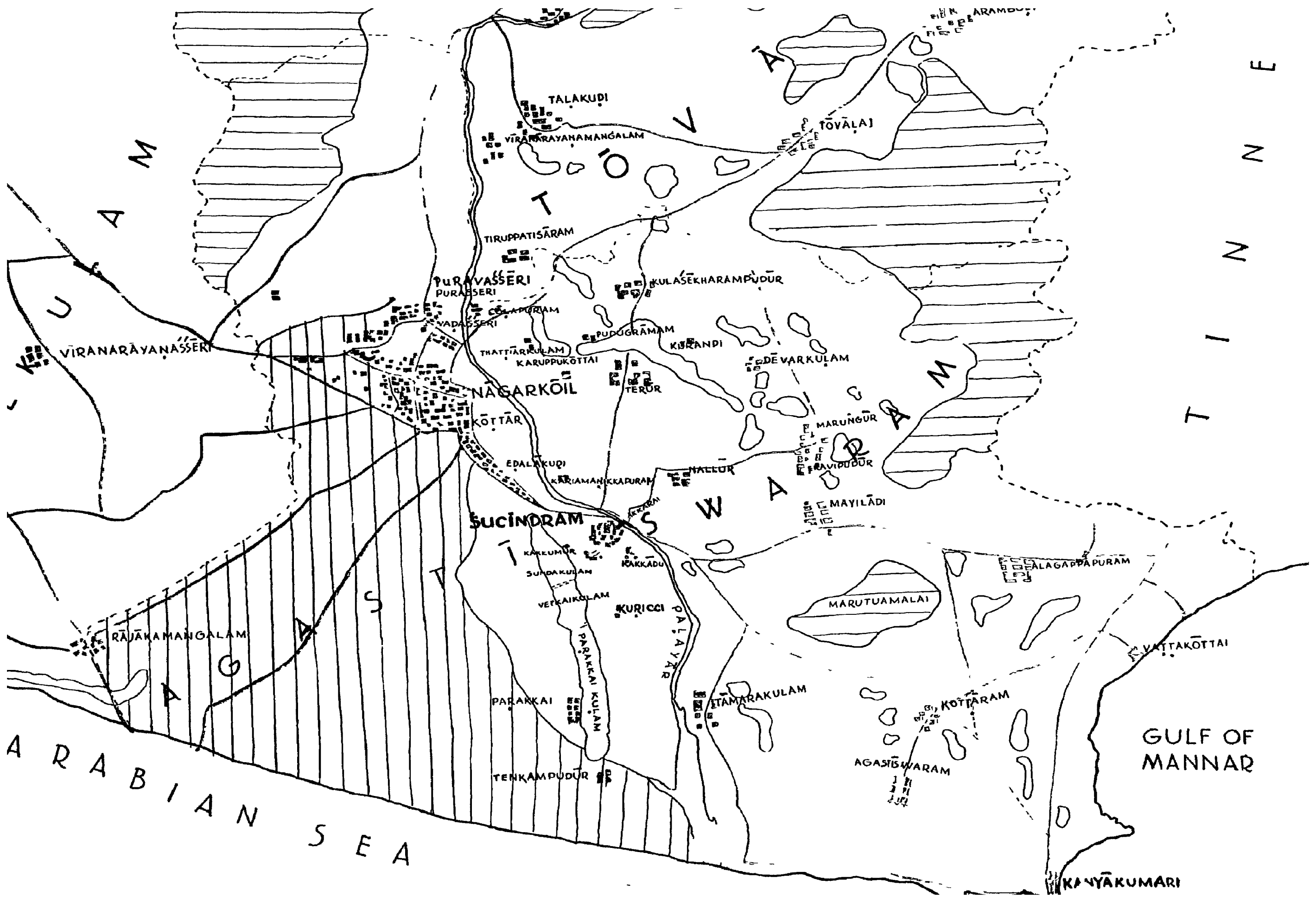
SCALE : 1 INCH - 1 MILE


HILLY REGION


DISSECTED WOODLAND LOWER ELEVATION

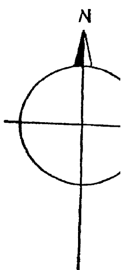
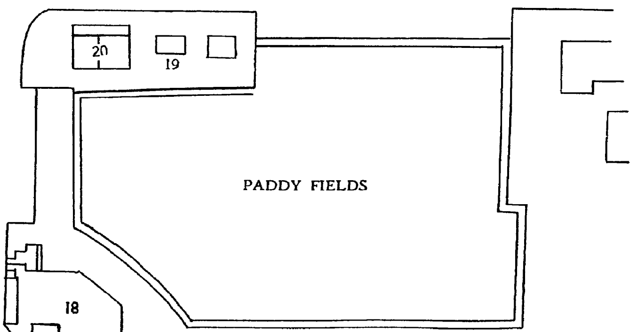
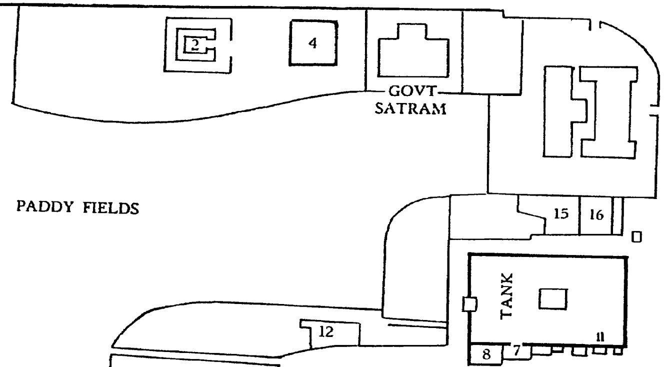
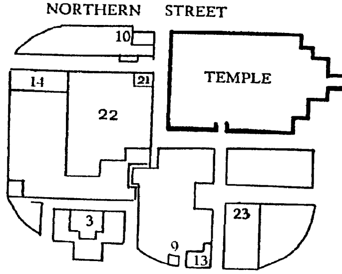
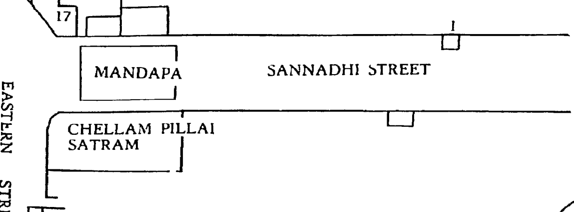
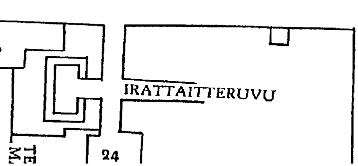
PALAYAR

5427 ▲ MAHĒNDRAGIRI


TOVALAI
TALAKUDI
VIRANARAYANAMANGALAM
TIRUPPATISARAM
PURAVASSERI
PURASSERI
KULASEKHARAMPUDUR
COLAPURAM
VADASSERI
PUDUGRAMAM
KIRANDI
DEVARKULAM
THATTIARKULAM
KARUPPUKOTTAI
NAGARKOIL
KOTTAR
TERUR
MARUNGUR
ERAVIPUDUR
EDALAKUDI
KARIAMANIKKAPURAM
NALLUR
MAYILADI
SUCINDRAM
KARKUMUR
KAKKADU
SUNDAKULAM
VETKAIKOLAM
KURICCI
PALAYAR
PARAKKAI KULAM
PARAKKAI
TENKAMPUDUR
ALAGAPPAPURAM
MARUTUAMALAI
VATTAKOTTAI
ITAMARAKULAM
KOTTARAM
AGASTISWARAM
KANYAKUMARI
VIRANARAYANASSERI
RAJAKAMANGALAM
GULF OF MANNAR
ARABIAN SEA
TINNE
TOVALAI
AGASTISWARAM

KEY TO PLAN No. 1 ŚUCĪNDRAM

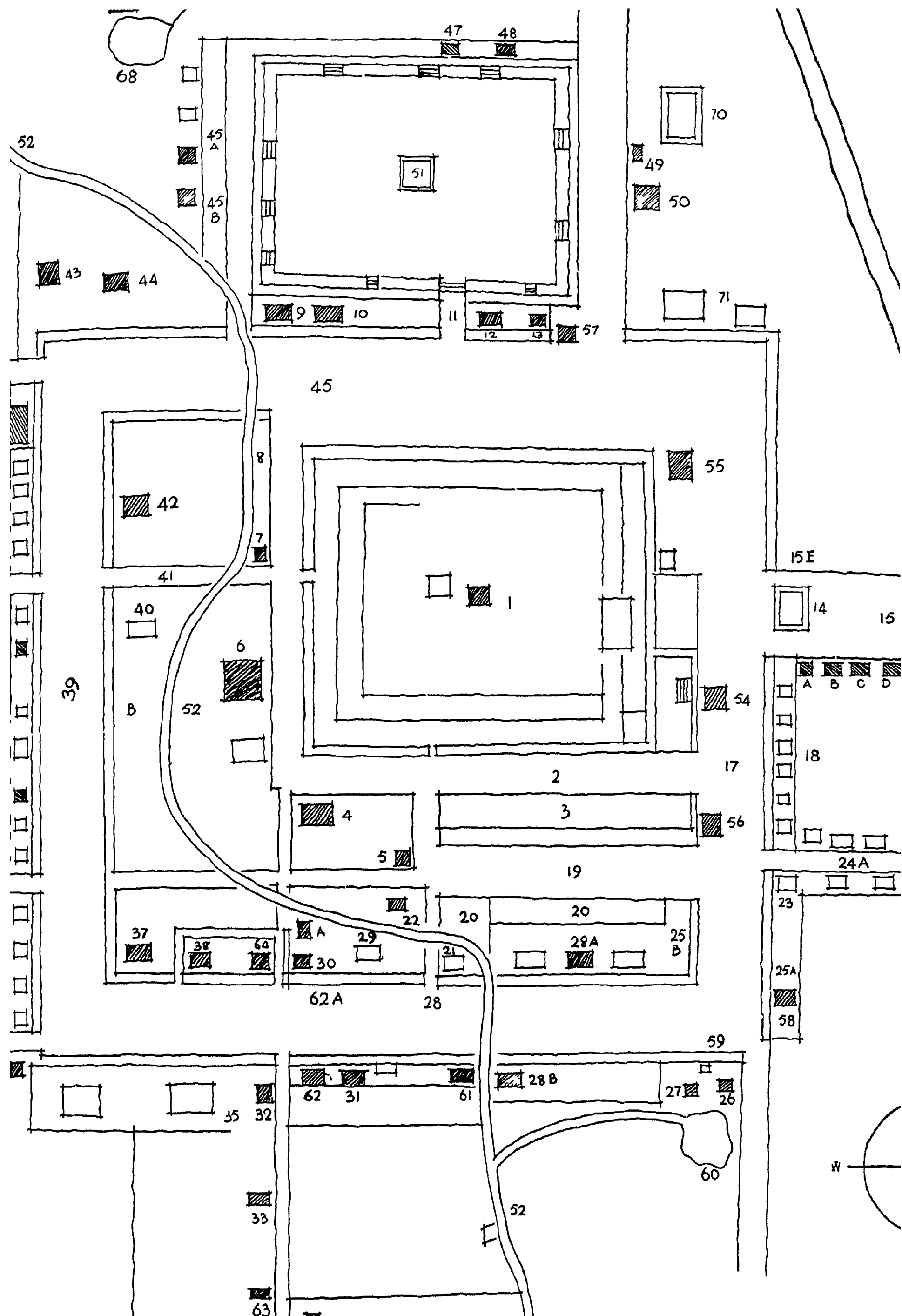
1 Kulaśēkhara Pillayār Kōil.
2 Aññanameḻutiya Kandan Śāstān Kōil.
3. Pērambalam
4. Dvārakai Emperumān Kōil
5 Vantimalacci Amman Kōil.
6 Ceccaikkottāram.
7 Kottāram.
8 Tantri Matha
9 Japakkār Matha
10. Nambūdiri Matha
11 Pōṟṟimār Matha.
12. Māṛācci Matha
13. Ayyā Matha
14 Manalikkara Matha.
15 Tiruvāduturai Matha
16 Munnūṟṟunankai Amman Kōil
17 Umayorubhāgam Matha.
18 Garden
19. Postmaster's Quarters.
20 Post Office
21 Vattappalli Dispensary
22. Vattappalli Matha
23 Primary School
24 Tekkuman Street.

PALAYAR
CAPE ROAD
CAPE ROAD
GOVT SATRAM
PADDY FIELDS
PATH LEADING TO THE TOWN
PADDY FIELDS
TANK
NORTHERN STREET
TEMPLE
EASTERN STREET
WESTERN STREET
SOUTHERN STREET
MANDAPA
SANNADHI STREET
CHELLAM PILLAI SATRAM
HOUSES
HOUSES
N
IRATTAITTERUVU
PADDY FIELDS
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KEY TO PLAN No 2 ŚUCĪNDRAM IN THE TIME OF BĀLAMĀRTĀNDA VARMA, 1729-1758 A D

1 Vadakkēdam and Tekkēdam.
A Udaya Mārtānda Vināyakar
2 Mādatteru
3 Quarters of Śaiva Pillamār.
4. Nelkaḻañciam
5 Vīra Mārtāṇḍa Vināyakar
6 Vattappalli Matha
7 Mēlavāśal Vināyakar
8 Mullamangalam Pōṟṟi Matha.
9 Tantri Matha
10 Vēmbadi Palace and Hōmapura
11 Ārāt Ghat.
12 Kīḻśānti Pōṟṟi Matha
13. ——Common Matha
14 Anuppu Mandapa
15 Sannadhi Street.
A Pañca Vādyakkār
B Pipers
C Nattuvan's Residence
D Dēvadāsis
16 Kulaśēkhara Vināyakar
17 East Car Street
18 Quarters of Pillamār.
19 Nadutteru.
20 Dēvadāsis
21 Queen's Palace
22 Mēlilaṅgam Nattuvan's House
23 Abhimānam Kārta Vināyakar
24 Koṟṟayār Tittai Teru
A Pillamār
B. Muṟayīda Mānēndi Ullittār House.
C. Amman Kōil [of the Village Trust]
D Perumāl Temple [of Yādavas]
25. A and B. Quarters of Nambiyārs.
26. Tāḻankulam Vināyakar
27 Pukaḻum-Perumāl Śāsta
28 South Car Street.
A Quarters of Brahmins
B Dharmapuram Matha
29 Puttillam Pōṟṟi Matha
30 Vēliyaṟa Pōṟṟi Matha
31. Quarters of Brahmins
32 Tekkuman Kulaśēkhara-Perumāl
33 Tekkuman Pōṟṟi Matha
34. ——Sāksi Vināyakar
35 Ceccai Kottāram.
36 Grāma Vināyakar.
37. Śrīdharamangalam Pōṟṟi Matha
38 Pērambalam Cidambarēśvaiai
39 West Car Street.
40 Vantimalacci Amman Kōil
41. Ārarivār Inda Vāśal Mudukku
42. Kūṟṟampalli Pōṟṟi Matha.
43 Araśil Pōṟṟi Matha
44 Sōmāśimangalam Pōṟṟi Matha.
45. North Car Street
A Araśadi Vināyakar
B Quarters of Brahmins
46 Śrīmad Dvāraka
47 Tiruvāduturai Matha
48. Munnūṟṟu Nankai Amman Kōil.
49 Karungāli Amman Kōil
50 Kuttuppurai
51 Teppakkulam
52 Manakkudiyān Kāyal
53 Paḻayār
54 Svāmi Tēr
55 Amman Tēr
56. Pillayār Tēr
57 Indran Tēr [Capra Tēr]
58. Trikkan Cārtu Mandapa [East Street]
59 —— Do
60 Tāḻamkulam
61 Trikkan Cārtu Mandapa [South Street]
62 Mandapappadi Mandapa
A Mandapappadi (Sixth Utsava) Mandapa
63 Trikkan Cārtu Mandapa [Tekkuman]
64 Kaḻuvēṟṟu Mandapa
65 Trikkan Cārtu Mandapa [West Street]
66 —— Do
67 Karuvēlappura Mālikai
68 Lotus Pond
69 Cengalkettu Nandāvanam
70 Pātrakkulam
71 Nandāvanam and Kalavara

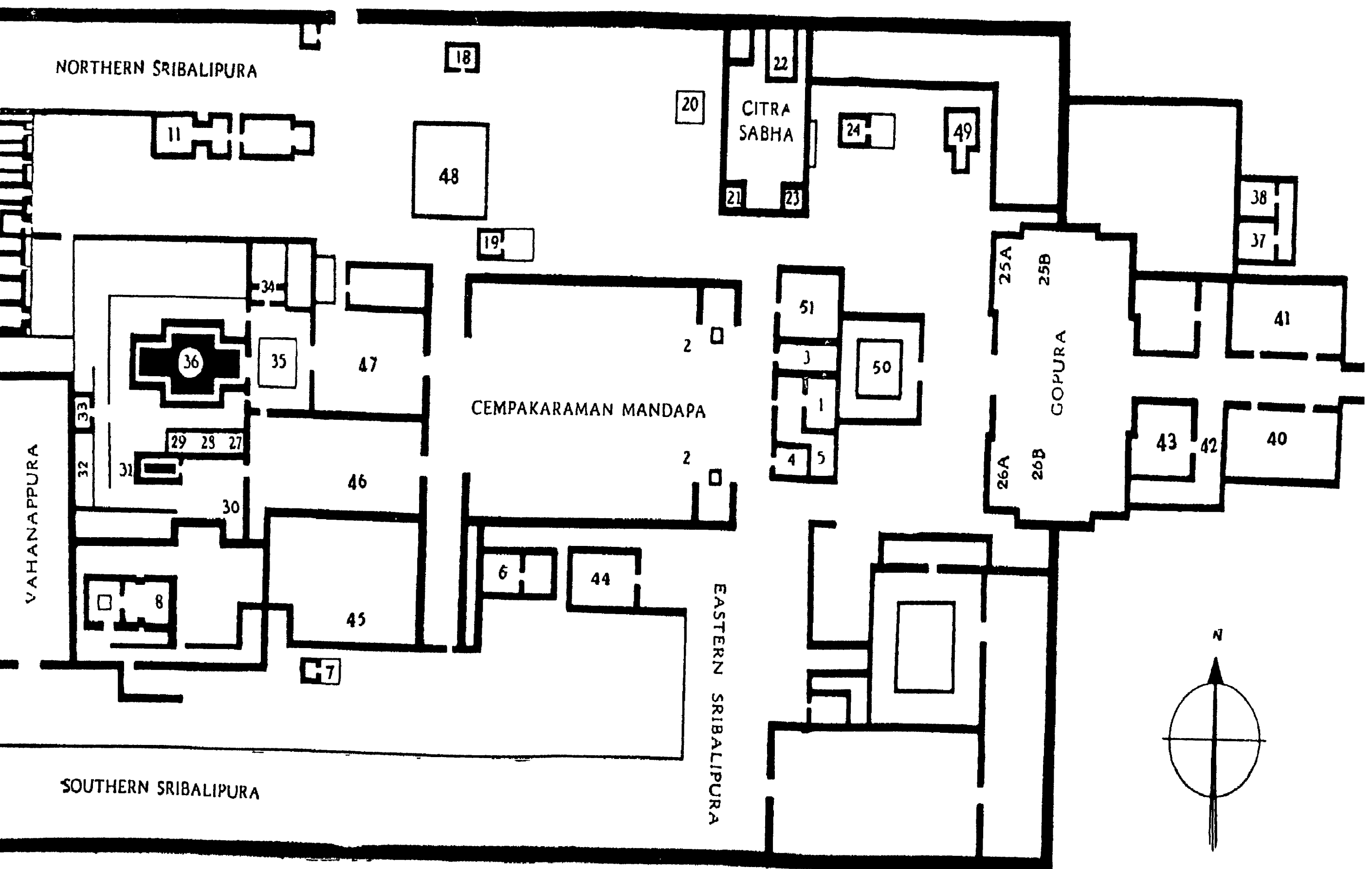


68
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20
23
37
A
29
28 A
25 B
38
64
30
21
25A
62 A
28
58
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62
31
61
28 B
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KEY TO THE GROUND PLAN OF THE ŚUCĪNDRAM TEMPLE

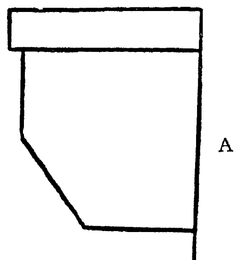
1 Konrayadināthar
2 Dvārapālakar
3 Nandi
4 Garudālvār
5. Daksināmūrti
6. Nīlakantha Vināyakar
7. Kankālanāthar
8. Kailāsattu Mahādēvar
9 Cēravātal Śāsta
10 Rāmasvāmy Kōil
11 Subrahmaniasvāmi Kōil
12 Jayantīśvarattu Durga
13 —— Mahādēvar
14 —— Śrīcakram
15. —— Śrīkrsna
16 —— Nārāyanēsvarar
17 —— Rāmēśvarar
18 Kālabhairavar
19 Aramvalattamman
20 Āñjanēya
21. Vallabha Ganapati
22 Citra Sabha
23. Subrahmania
24 Dēvēndra Vināyakar
25A Gōpuravātal Natarājar
25B Gōpuravātal Kāli
26A Gōpuravātal Nandikēsvarar
26B. Gōpuravātal Śāsta
27. Durga
28 Ganapati
29 Śankaranārāyana
30 Garudālvār
31 Tekkēdam or Tiruvēngadavinna Perumāl
32 Pallikondaperumāl
33 Śucīndaperumāl
34 Sabhāpati
35 Nandi
36 Vadakkēdam or Sthānumālayap-perumāl
37 Udayamārtānda Vināyakar
38 Tēradi Mādan
39 Tēradi Bhūtattān
40 Manager's Office
41 Main Store
42 Temple Guard's Room
43 Strong Room
44 Vasanta Mandapa
45 Madappalli
46 Tekkēdam Mandapa
47 Udayamārtānda Mandapa
48 Alankāra Mandapa
49. Nīrāli
50 Ūñcal Mandapa
51. Vāhanappura

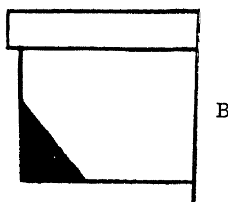
GROUND PLAN OF THE SUCINDRAM TEMPLE

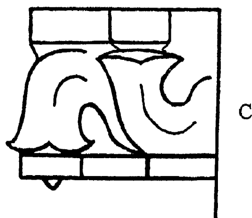


ARCHITECTURAL *MOTIFS*

Fig II







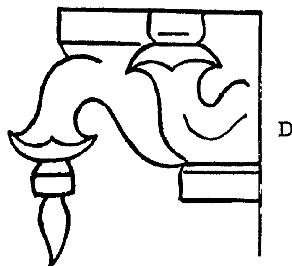


Fig I

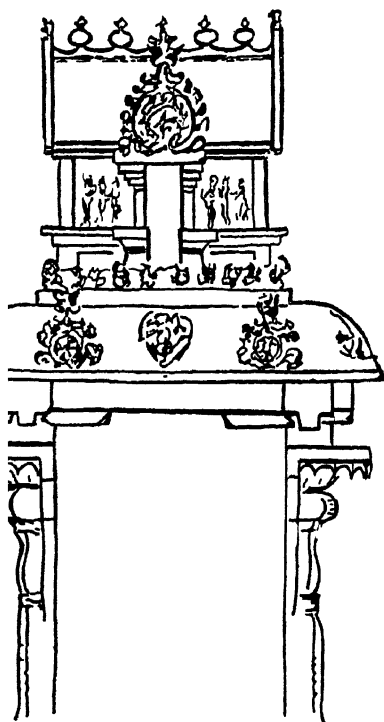
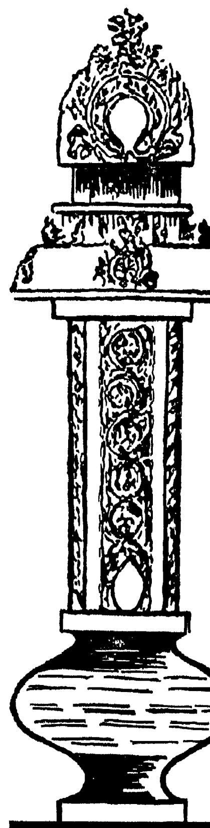


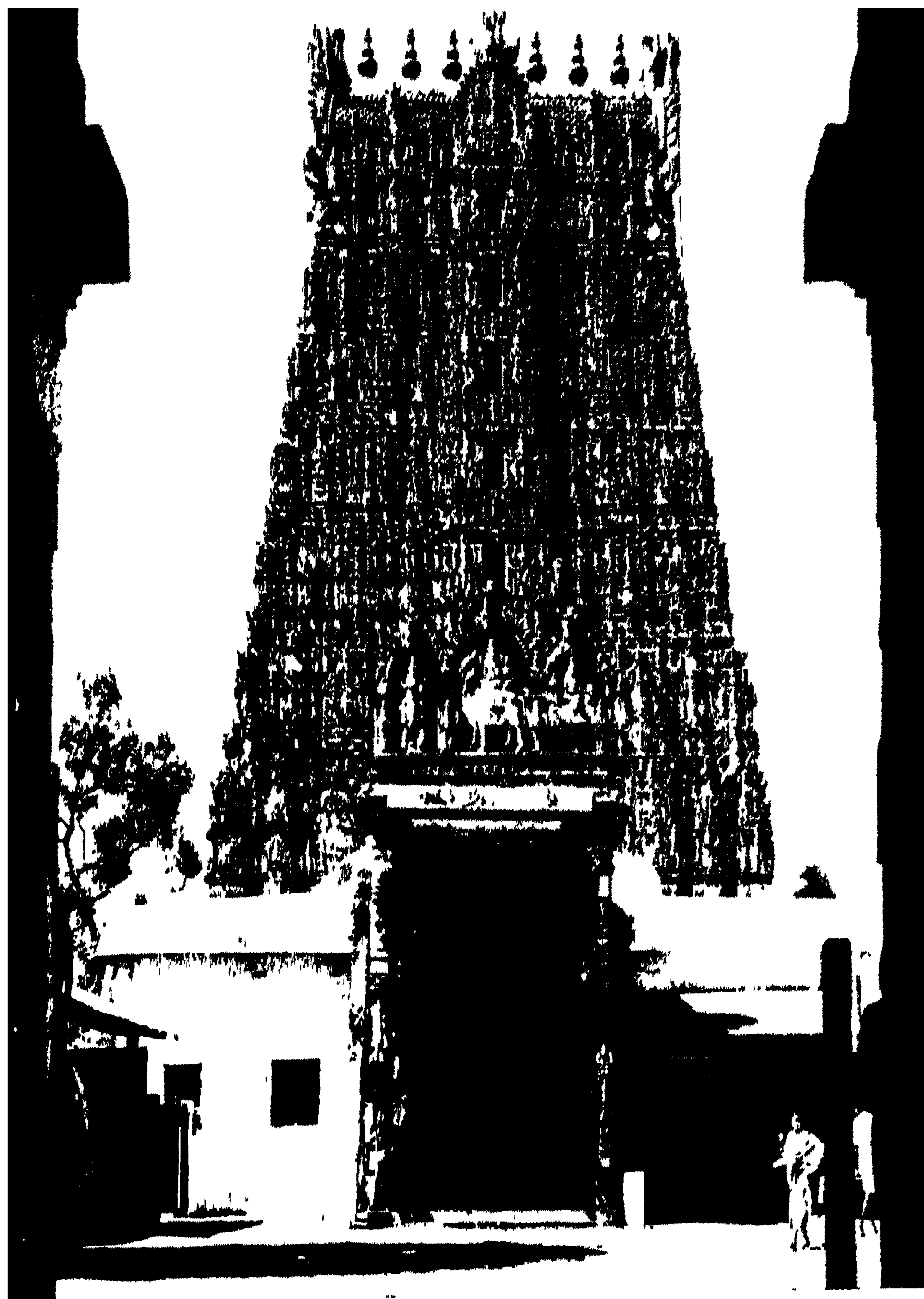
Fig III



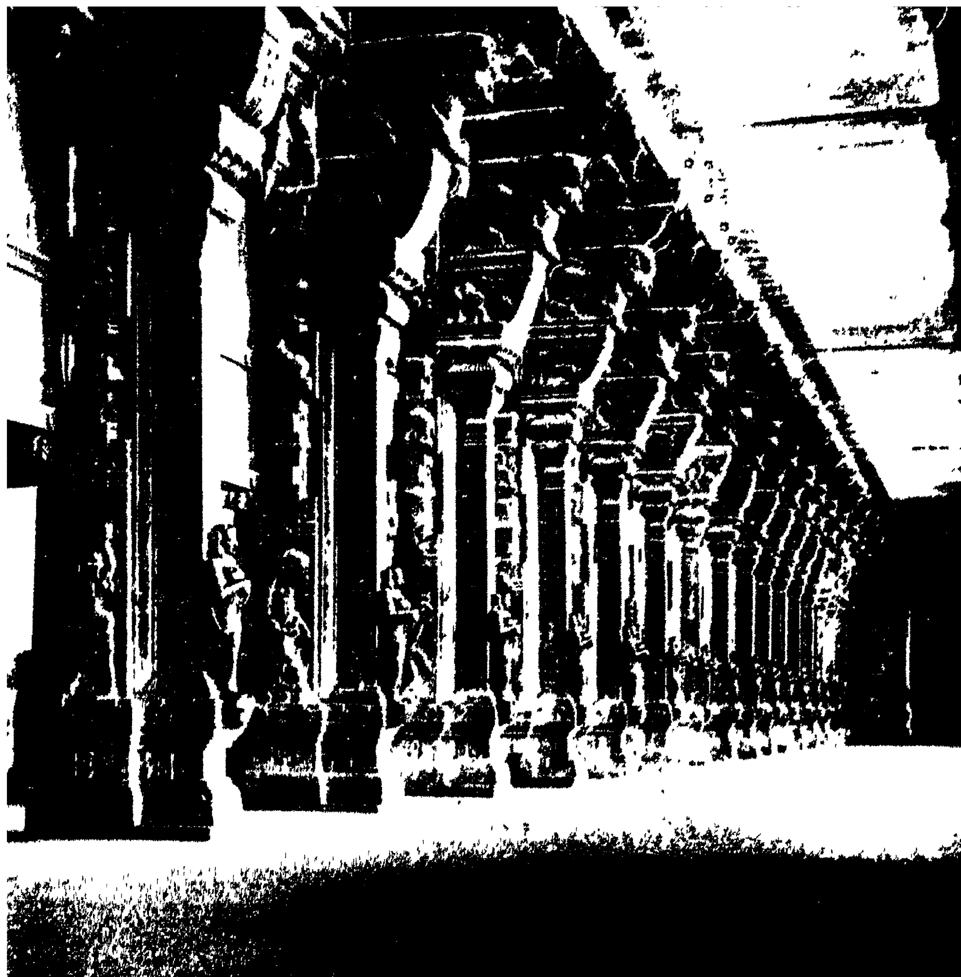
I Niche on the façade of the Gōpura Base

II. Pattern of the Corbel at. (A) Kailāsanāthar Kōil (B) The First Prākāra. (C) Udayamārtānda Mandapa (D) Cempakarāman Mandapa

III. Kumbhapañjaram on the façade of the Gōpura Base



GOPURA



4F SOUTHERN SRIBALIPURA

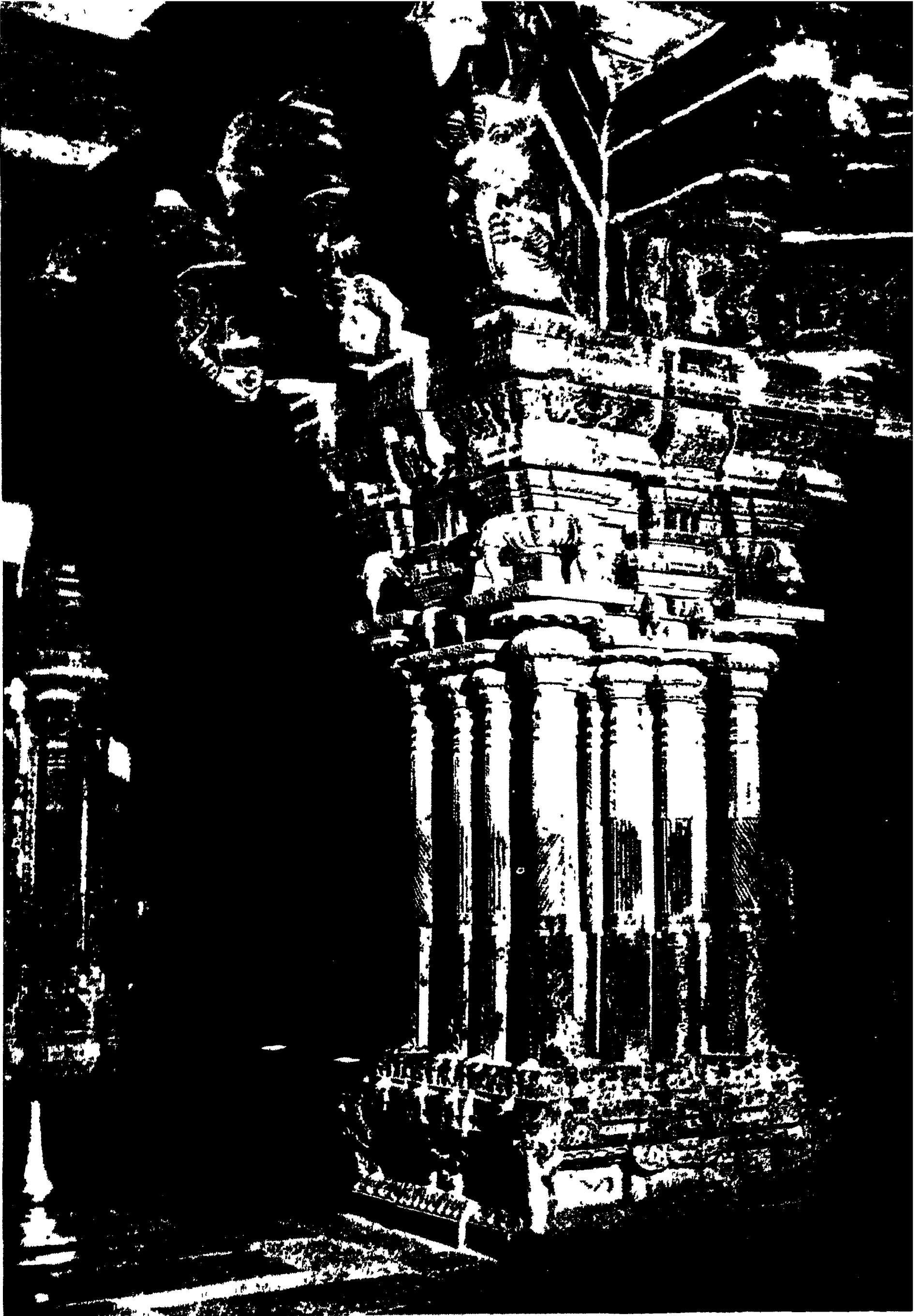


PLATE 4 - MUSICAL PILLARS



PLATE 5 - PILLARS IN THE ALANKARA MANDAPA



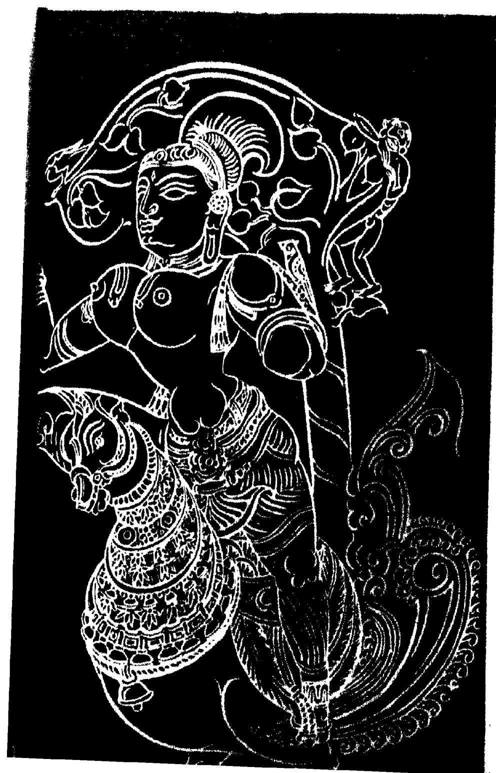




PLATE 7 • MANMATHA



ɪRNA



PLATE 10 - ARJUNA



KANKALANATHAR

PLATE 12 - VENUGOPALA





PLATL 15 - RAMA



PLATE 17 FACADE OF VADAKKEDAM

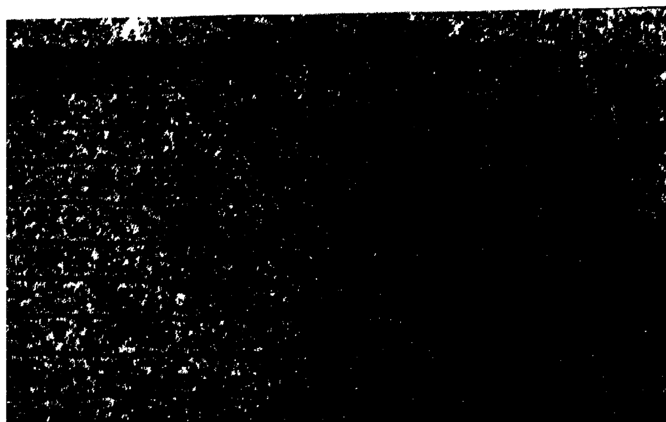




PLATE 19 - GANESANI

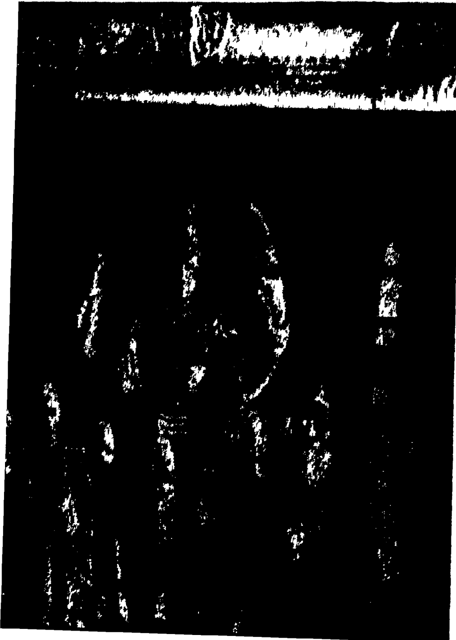




PLATE 21 - DAKSHINAMURTI





PLATE 23 - GAJAHARAMURTI





RUDANARAYANA





PLATE 27 - SURYA





BRONZES



- BRONZES

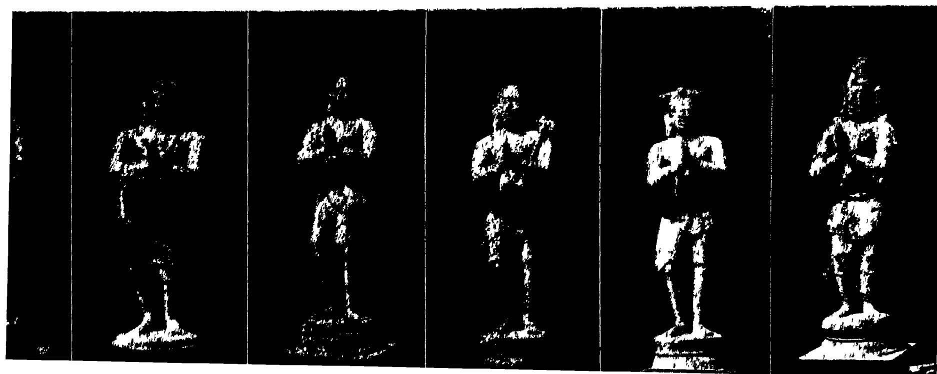




PLATE 32 - UMAMAHESVARAMURTI



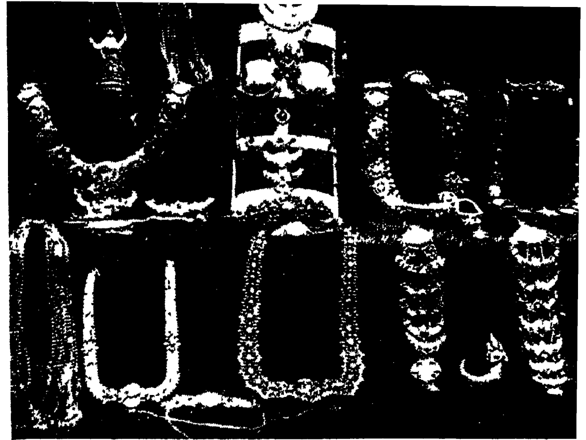


PLATE 34 - JEWELS

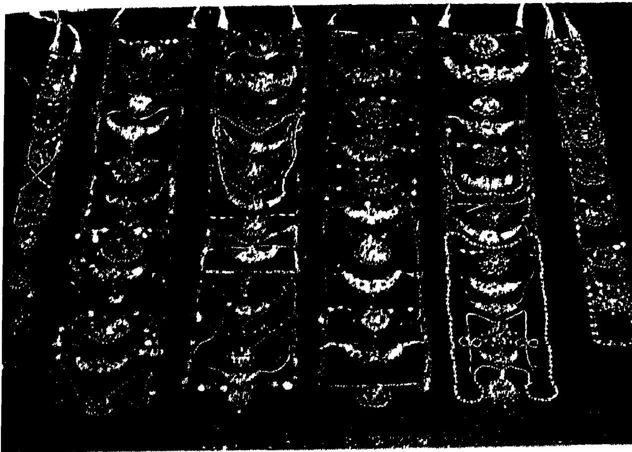


PLATE 35 - JEWELS



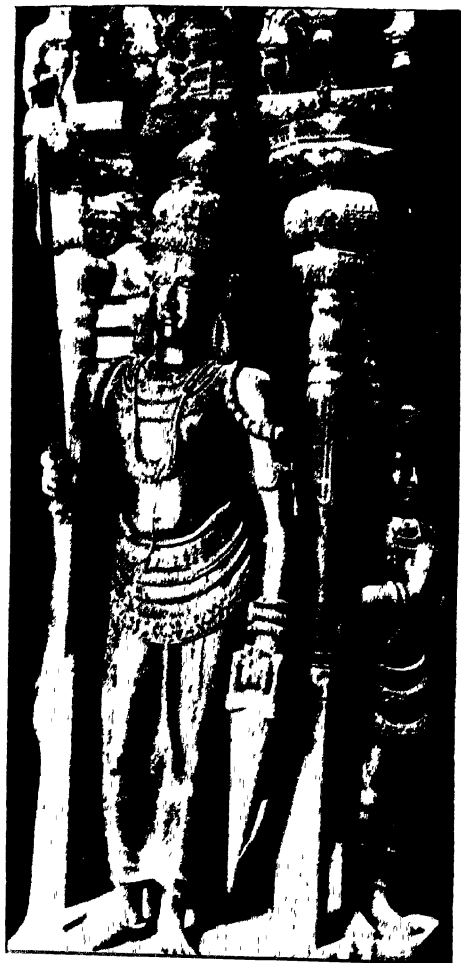




PLATE 37 - TIRUMALA NAYAK

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